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THE NEW

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The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S fourth Budget (which is discussed in detail in a leading article and in our City page) is a reflection of the general policy of the Government. The present discontents cry out for bold measures. But Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues turn a deaf ear even to proposals aiming, like Mr. Lloyd George's "New Deal," at some reconstruction within the limits of the capitalist system. What is most lamentable in the Budget is not its sins of commission but its sins of omission. The Chancellor licks his lips over our revival of prosperity—with a background of the depressed areas, with great staple industries like cotton and coal and shipbuilding in a pitiable state, with the social services starved for money, with the problem of unemployment still clamouring for solution. On Budget day last year, as Sir Herbert Samuel reminded him, there were 2,201,000 registered unemployed; on Monday of this week there were 2,153,000—a reduction of only 48,000. And this, we are told with the utmost complacency, is "eighty per cent. prosperity"!

Stresa and Geneva

The Stresa and Geneva Conferences have not, of course, produced any settlement or any plan for creating peace in Europe. Nobody thought they would. But they have shown some unity of purpose among the French, Italian and British Governments in regard to Germany. They committed our own statesmen to a rather more positive affirmation of support for the system of collective security than they have hitherto been willing to give—and that, though we undertook no new obligations, was of practical importance in abating French distrust. Some distrust still lingers, it is true, and the Germans, on their side, have apparently not yet given up hope of keeping Great Britain detached. In this we trust they are in error. The first condition of preventing war and of checking the race in armaments, of averting the mischief of hostile alliances, lies in the solidarity of the League Powers. Of course, that is not all that is necessary. It is very well to denounce and to agree to "oppose by all practicable means any unilateral repudiations of treaties." But we must also offer the victims of the treaties some practicable means of revising them. The word "revision," it is noteworthy, was used at Stresa for the first time in an official document issued by the victorious Powers. The word "sanctions" was not, though the idea was obviously envisaged. It is to be hoped it was envisaged with sufficient clarity and that the acceptance of the French declaration in its sensibly modified form by a united League will be sufficient to convince Hitler that intransigence or aggression will not pay him, and that on the assumption that his actual rearmament will be

accepted as a *fait accompli*—we cannot undo it in any case —he will see that it is good business to re-enter the League.

Imperialism and Collective Security

If this result is achieved the recent comings and goings in Europe will have been worth while. They will have prevented the relapse into sheer anarchy. For the alternative to commitments and collective security is not isolation and peace, as Lord Beaverbrook would like to make us believe, but renewed alliances and inevitable war. If the League Powers hold firm against aggression they have accomplished the first step; if they learn to consider grievances reasonably stated they have taken the second step. The third, if it were possible for them, would be to put their own houses in order and to renounce their own types of aggression. It is an ill omen that they have for the second time refused to bother themselves with Abyssinia and it is difficult to resist the inference of a French undertaking not to interfere with Mussolini's African designs. Mussolini, it is clear, is playing the old imperialistic game; he is out to gain what territory and influence he can in Africa, hoping probably to get what he wants without war, but all the time preparing for it while he pretends to negotiate. It now seems that he never really intended to negotiate on the whole dispute, but merely on the Wal Wal incident. As long as economic imperialism dominates the policy of nations there can be no real peace. The best we can hope for is that fear will keep them together on major issues so that war will be postponed. And while it is postponed we must struggle to change economic imperialism.

Mr. Roosevelt and Congress

President Roosevelt, returning from his vacation, refused to admit depression about the prospects of the New Deal. He indicated that Congress will be expected to complete the legislative programme, and he spoke with something of his earlier emphasis about the spending of the $1,000 millions (£200,000,000 at par) voted by Congress for immediate purposes under the Work Relief Act. Mr. Roosevelt sought to check the prevailing wild guesses concerning the disposal of this sum by stating that the bulk of it would be laid out under the control of existing federal agencies, that there was no intention of releasing more than was necessary, but it could be taken for granted that the whole would be spent by July 1st, 1936. The political significance of this arrangement is manifest. The programme is to spend one thousand million dollars (an American billion) upon projects of work-relief by the time the presidential campaign is opened next year, while the Administration is presumably left in possession of the major part of the $4,800 millions covered by the Act. If, under the continuing weight of the depression, the programme can be adhered to, then the results in 1936 should be of more positive political weight than the finances of the New Deal as expounded, in terms of a miraculously balanced budget, by the Secretary of the Treasury.

Labour and the New Deal

But no fact could be plainer than that the policy of work-relief, with scales of pay below the standard wage rates, is fraught with the gravest dangers for the Roosevelt Administration. It has been commonly assumed in America that Congress accepted the lower-than-standard wages clause as the result of a bargain in relation to the interpretation of Section 7A of the Recovery Act (the crucial clause confirming the right of union recognition); but it must be obvious that no bargain of that kind could have any meaning. The American Federation of Labour has broken with Mr. Roosevelt, and the launching of work-relief schemes under the new rules has produced a crop of strikes against the work-relief rates of pay. The latest move against the Work Relief Act—which the nation must regard as the President's own measure—is an attempt to organise a total of 3,500,000 unemployed, directly affected by the wage-scales, in a nation-wide strike against the work-relief system. For the time the attempt is certain to fail, but it is symptomatic of a general Labour revolt such as Mr. Roosevelt cannot ignore.

The New Deal in the Courts

Mr. Roosevelt has also again come up against the Federal Courts. On this occasion, a district Federal judge has decided that the entire Act under which the production of tobacco is being controlled is unconstitutional, apparently on the ground that commodity production is an intra-State matter, over which the Federal Government possesses no jurisdiction. If this judgment were to be upheld by the Supreme Court, it would evidently invalidate the whole of President Roosevelt's measures of Agricultural Adjustment, which are all based on crop control, limitation of permitted acreage, and similar measures for the restriction of output. At present the Agricultural Adjustment Act itself does not seem to have been challenged; for tobacco is controlled under a separate Act. But the burden of the judgment seems to apply equally to the A.A.A. The cynic will observe that the very extent of the disturbance to the President's policy which the validation of the judgment would involve constitutes an excellent reason for prophesying that it will not be upheld, and that the Supreme Court will take, if only by a bare majority, a different view of " intra-State " functions from that which a single Federal judge has now expressed. Nevertheless, the making of the judgment illustrates once again the point that the whole Roosevelt policy rests, in face of the American Constitution, on an extraordinarily thin foundation of loyalty, so that any real waning of the President's popularity might bring Supreme Court judgments raining about his ears. For the present his popularity with the middle class holds. The New York Stock Exchange has evicted its anti-Roosevelt officers and replaced them by supporters of the New Deal who are prepared to accept moderate reform in matters of stock speculation. Big Business and high finance are not yet prepared to challenge the President's leadership. Why make him a martyr when there is every prospect of making him a convert?

Loyal Salaams

At this loyal season one of the Dominion Premiers, Mr. Lyons of Australia, is already in London and three others are ploughing the seas on their way to congratulate the King on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his accession. In the manner of such occasions a good deal of business may be combined with patriotic enthusiasm. Mr. Lyons has arranged his time-table with more decorum than his fellows, for he will probably have completed his meat settlement before he takes the road to St. Paul's.

But in the other carriages Mr. Bennett of Canada will still have Imperial Defence on his mind and Mr. Forbes of New Zealand will probably be revolving mutton, while General Hertzog, the doyen of the party (he has been spared to South Africa for eleven years), will certainly have his mind fixed upon Bechuanaland. His problem is how to persuade the Imperial Government to bring this Protectorate into the Union without being forced publicly and definitely to promise a native policy which would be tolerable to the consciences of civilised people. General Hertzog and his followers desire to end the British protection of Bechuanaland for several reasons. They want to dump the "surplus natives" of the Union into the Kalahari wastes and to cut off the richer lands from the present reservation on its eastern border and parcel them out among the poor whites. Since the Home Government stands directly in a trustee position for the natives in Bechuanaland, General Hertzog knows well that a public announcement of his policy and a suggestion that his proposed Native laws should be applied to Bechuanaland would call forth a storm of protest. The Joint Select Committee on his Native Bills reported in South Africa eight months ago. The report has been kept secret, but its gist is no secret. It would involve in effect the abolition of such rights as still remain to the black South African. The natives of the Protectorate must not be brought within this iniquitous system.

Is the L.P.T.B. a Public Authority?

County Court decisions do not create judicial precedents; and Judge Beazley's ruling at Ilford County Court that the London Passenger Transport Board is a "public authority" and not a profit-making concern may still be challenged in a higher court. In the case in question damages were claimed against the Board by a passenger who had been injured on a bus. The judge held that negligence had been proved, but that the Board was protected by the Public Authorities Protection Act, under which claims for damages against a public authority must be brought forward within six months. The point is of interest because it may clearly affect other "public concerns" besides the L.P.T B.—for example, the Central Electricity Board or the B.B.C. These latter bodies are indeed in one respect in a different position. The C.E.B. have only loan stock bearing a fixed rate of interest, and the B.B.C. no stock at all; whereas the L.P.T.B. have a class of stock which still carries a variable dividend. This last relic of "profit-making" might conceivably be held to constitute it a "profit-making concern"; but it does not seem to follow that it might not be a "public authority" all the same. After all, the Post Office also makes profit, which the Treasury is prompt to appropriate; but no-one is likely to question its status on that account. The L.P.T.B.'s "profits" go to private stock-holders, and not to the public; but is the difference relevant to the point at issue, however important it may be in itself? If this case, or some other raising the same point, goes to a higher court, we shall know how the law stands.

The Indefensible Subsidy

The record of the beet-sugar subsidy well illustrates the inherent vice of this sort of assistance to "private enterprise." The cultivation of sugar-beet in Great Britain not only is uneconomic to-day, but is likely to remain uneconomic as long as cane-sugar is available from Cuba, Mauritius and the West Indies—that is to say, indefinitely. Without the subsidy, the industry would die out. But, having decided to subsidise this uneconomic form of agriculture, we have created round it a host of vested interests. The farmers in the Eastern Counties, to which beet production is nearly confined, will take the lead; but behind them will be the factory-owners who produce sugar from the beet, the labourers who fear loss of employment if the industry is given up, and the main body of agriculturists, who want subsidies for other things and would see in the withdrawal of this particular subsidy a set-back to their hopes. Mr. Greene and one of his colleagues on the Sugar-Beet Committee have concluded that the subsidy should end, the third member dissenting. But the majority evidently sees how much opposition its proposals are certain to arouse; for it makes alternative proposals to be acted on if the Government decides that the subsidy is to go on. Subsidies are like protective tariffs—only more so. The more fantastic they are, the more dislocation their removal will necessarily produce. It is true enough that beet cultivation employs more labour than any other crop except potatoes; but have we really reached the point of regarding this as a positive merit? If so, why not subsidise the home production of oranges and bananas, which would use up more labour still?

The Death Penalty

The death sentence on Mrs. De La Mare cannot stand. The jury system works well enough in some ways, but when, as in Guernsey, it decides a matter of life and death by the narrow vote of laymen on the most technical and intricate problems of mental stability, the time has come to limit its jurisdiction. That juries should decide on questions of fact is right; that the interpretation of facts which really involve diagnosis of abnormal physochology should be left to a panel of experts, is surely beyond challenge. Meanwhile the indefatigable Mrs. Van der Elst has caused sufficient trouble outside Wandsworth prison to embarrass the police and to necessitate the attention of Lord Trenchard. By bringing charges of obstruction the police can make these demonstrations against the death penalty difficult and expensive, but in the long run such repression only acts as a spur to energy and ingenuity. The more Lord Trenchard keeps Mrs. Van der Elst away from the prison gates, the more he keeps her cause in the news. That presumably is exactly what she wants.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Readers of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION will have been glad to notice that after three months' leave of absence Mr. David Garnett has again resumed his regular contribution on *Books in General*. We are glad also to be able to announce that Mr. Raymond Mortimer, whose writing in the paper is familiar to all readers, has been appointed Literary Editor with Mr. G. W. Stonier as Assistant Literary Editor.

All MSS. and letters should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 *Great Turnstile, High Holborn, London, W.C.*1. *The postage on this issue is: Inland,* 1*d.; Foreign,* 1½*d.; Canada,* 1*d.*

JAM AND POWDER

MR. CHAMBERLAIN is both a just man and a prudent man, and in framing his Budget proposals he has doubtless had one eye on the principle of social equity (as he understands it) and the other on the next election. If, according to the general habit, we regard the Budget as an annual distribution of powder and jam, it seems that the jam predominates. It is rather thinly spread, to be sure; but it goes to a large number of people who need it. Last year the chief beneficiaries were the well-to-do income tax payers; this time it is the turn of the poorer. It is not quite true to call it, as the Chancellor does, a poor man's Budget; those who are relieved are for the most part the moderately poor—the petite bourgeoisie and the better-paid section of the working class. They want relief, though the very poor want it even more, and the concessions made to them will presumably be of some—though not, we imagine, decisive—electoral value to the National Government.

Nothing heroic, of course, was to be expected from Mr. Chamberlain. He is banking, very cautiously, on the revival of prosperity. He makes the most of the improvement so far as it has gone, and cites in illustration statistics of the millions more cigarettes we are smoking and the millions more pints of beer and cups of tea we are drinking. He declares that we have already recovered 80 per cent. of our prosperity, and sees no reason why, "given peace abroad and a fair measure of unity at home, we should not during the current year make a further substantial advance." This all sounds very cheerful, and we should be as pleased as Mr. Chamberlain about it, but for one or two trifling considerations—the chief of which is that we do not share his view of what constitutes "prosperity," whether 80 per cent. or 100 per cent. Trade returns, and more cigarettes and beer and tea, are not the sole measuring rod. There still remains a huge volume of unemployment and destitution; Britain is still, and will be when and if our "recovery" is complete, what it was in Disraeli's famous phrase, two nations—a nation of the rich and a nation of the poor. But let us leave that point for the moment, and see what Mr. Chamberlain, within the limits imposed by circumstances and his own principles, proposes to do with his surplus. The surplus is a modest one—roughly £11,000,000 in all, including the £4,470,000 which he is transferring from the Road Fund to general revenue, and the new duties on heavy oil and soya beans. These are the powder, which will be swallowed with a good deal of protest. We are already witnessing, indeed, the preliminary grimaces and threats. The increase of duty on heavy oil from 1*d.* to 8*d.* will have serious effects, it is said, on road motor transport; it may raise bus fares. The soya bean tax will affect the price of cattle food and perhaps of margarine. The raid on the Road Fund surplus is denounced as both unjust and bad policy. Bad policy, indeed, it might be, if the National Government were really alive to any large plans of national development; but Mr. Chamberlain will doubtless get away with it for more immediately popular short-run purposes, and he has overcome Mr. Hore-Belisha's objections by promising that he shall have consideration if in the next year or so he wants more money for roads than the Road Fund can supply.

In the distribution of his jam the Chancellor, having turned his back on the Sinking Fund (there will be few to complain of this), devotes himself to lightening the burdens put on in 1931. The remaining half of the cuts in the pay of civil servants, police, teachers and the rest, is restored. That was universally expected and will be universally applauded. Next there are the income tax reliefs. These will cost the Treasury rather more—£4,500,000 this year, £10,000,000 in a full year. The main changes are three—a reduction of the charge on the first £135 of taxable income (but this is coupled with an increase to the full standard rate between £135 and £175); an extra £20 on the married man's allowance; and a uniform allowance of £50 for every child. The first of these concessions will benefit some two and a half million taxpayers in varying degrees; the variations will result in a number of anomalies, but the general effect will be the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The third is clearly on the right lines, though it is only a timid approach to the system of family endowment which we should like to see established by the State. But it was supported by a singularly wrong-headed argument on Mr. Chamberlain's part. The case for higher children's allowances does not rest, as he seems to think it does, on the necessity of increasing the birth rate, and we hope and believe they will have no such result. Lastly, after bread come circuses. The entertainment tax is not a particularly objectionable one in principle; but its repeal on the six-penny seat will be a considerable boon to a host of people who have to look hard at every penny they spend on amusement. And the reduction of the tax on the dearer seats, where living players are performing, will give some little encouragement to those who want to see the theatre keep its end up against the cinema.

Such in its main outline is Mr. Chamberlain's fourth Budget—unsensational, conservative, fair within narrow limits. These are epithets of very faint praise; they amount to saying "it might have been worse," and that indeed is the best one can say for it. It is obviously not a Budget that Socialists can throw up their caps about. It is not the sort of Budget which this country wants—even in the opinion of many who stop short of Socialism. On the expenditure side there are deplorable excesses and defects. We are spending an extra £11,000,000 on armaments this year, and we shall very probably be asked in the not distant future, if the National Government remain in office, to provide still more for the same purpose. On the other hand, the social services are pinched; more money ought to be, and could be, found for education, for public health, for housing, for the relief of unemployment. It could be found for these and for other vital purposes—particularly the economic planning that the country is crying for—not merely from increases of indirect taxation (the proportion of which has risen formidably under the present Government), but from higher direct taxation. The death duties can be raised, and so can the rates on incomes at the higher levels, and they certainly would be raised, if the necessity arose, by a Conservative Government for warlike purposes. The day will come when they will be raised by a Socialist Government for peaceful purposes. It is Mr. Chamberlain's concern, of course, to stave off that day. It may seem that with only 20 per cent. of the road to go before we achieve what he regards as full prosperity, and with

his "poor man's Budget" as his banner, he has reason to be hopeful. But he is an old political hand, and we doubt whether he feels really confident about the poor men's gratitude next autumn or next spring.

FRUSTRATED JEWISH HOPES IN GERMANY

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

FOR reasons chiefly psychological, a wave of hopeful expectancy swept German Jews and through them the whole of European Jewry, shortly before the Saar plebiscite. The air was full of rumours of coming changes for the better in the attitude of the Nazi regime toward the Jewish problem. There was even talk in the newspapers of some mysterious "concordat" between the Nazis and the Jews. For the first time under the Nazi regime, Jewish fears and anxiety were somewhat relieved and even replaced by vague hopes and optimistic expectations.

Now it is clear that these hopes and expectations were based more on wish than on reality and that they were quickened into life primarily by the atmosphere which preceded the plebiscite. The moment was unique in Germany and in the whole of Europe. It was felt everywhere that the Saar plebiscite was going to be a turning point toward Liberalism in German and in international politics. There had been a visible change of attitude toward the Catholics, toward the former Liberals and even toward the Socialists. Why should there not be a change also toward the Jews? The trend in Germany before January 13th was clearly toward moderation, and German Jews, who expect so little and would be satisfied with so little, shared the general hopeful mood.

One must admit that apart from this general atmosphere of hope which seemed to pervade the whole of Europe, there were also several specific manifestations in German life which could be interpreted by the hopeful as the beginning of some change in the Jewish situation. Chief among these was, and still is, the fact that a certain section of German public opinion is quite definitely disgusted with the revolting vulgarity and sadistic brutality of Julius Streicher's anti-Semitic activity in Franconia. It would probably be too optimistic to claim that this section of German public opinion is entirely free from anti-Semitism, but anti-Semitism, too, has its limits, and Julius Streicher has most decidedly overstepped all limits of decency and of common civilised humanity. His daily outpouring of blood-libels against the Jews; his cruel hounding of every German suspected of entering a Jewish shop or of speaking to a Jew; his unceasing harping on the "Jewish rape of the blonde Aryan girls"; all these clearly indicate the diseased mind of a sexual pervert and sadist against which the more decent Germans revolt. Before the plebiscite, this revolt found forceful expression in a number of articles in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which deserved more attention than they received.

Another indication in the same direction was a series of decisions promulgated by the Labour Courts of Berlin and other cities, dealing with the right of German employers to dismiss Jewish employees because of their race. These Labour Courts have on the whole retained the former spirit of social reform and Labour sentiment which permeated them during the Social-Democratic regime, and they have invariably taken the line that private enterprises have no right to dismiss an employee merely because he is a Jew. The Aryan paragraph, they ruled, applied only to State institutions and not to private enterprises. This effort to confine the application of the Aryan paragraph to State employment only has not been limited to the Labour Courts alone. In fairness to the German Ministry of Economics, it must be stated that at least that department of the Government, too, has from the very first difficult days of Nazism striven to keep the application of the Aryan paragraph within its legal limits. First under Herr Schmidt and now under Dr. Schacht, this Ministry has served as a kind of a counter-balance to the terroristic anti-Semitism of Julius Streicher. For a realistic picture of the Jewish position in Germany it is well to remember that Jewish business has been molested less than any other Jewish activity. It is the Jewish intellectual, professional and labour elements that have been suppressed and cruelly persecuted in Germany. Jewish business has been tolerated from the very beginning, and that toleration has been rather on the increase since Dr. Schacht assumed power. All these facts, together with the general mood of hopeful expectations which prevailed in the country towards the end of last year, gave rise to the vague Jewish hopes born of strong desire. A well-known Nazi author, Herr Hans Blank, let drop the word "concordat" with the Jews; this was eagerly picked up by the Jewish press in Germany, and the legend of a more liberal attitude on the part of the Nazi regime toward the Jews gained some currency.

The first and most shattering blow to all those Jewish hopes was dealt by the result of the plebiscite itself. Nationalism had scored a great victory. The Nazi regime had had its strongest confirmation since the Hitler election in March, 1933. The sentiment of "my nation, right or wrong" could be fully depended upon to obscure all reason, material interests and even fears of Brown Houses and Concentration Camps. What need was there for moderation or for liberal sentiments? Has not reaction been fully justified by success? Whatever misgivings there might have existed about the wisdom of the strong-handed Nazi methods speedily disappeared. The Saar plebiscite was a landmark in European politics, but one which marked the strengthening of reaction and of the original, undiluted Nazism in every walk of German life, including, of course, also its relationship with the Jews.

No sooner were the results of the Saar made public than the Streicher press launched a new anti-Jewish drive, which surpasses in blood-thirstiness and obscenity anything that even Streicher himself has ever attempted before. The *Stürmer* advertises, for instance, that Jews sell "wine coloured with Christian blood"; that the Talmud condones murder and advocates homosexuality; that Jewish families entice "blonde Aryan girls into their houses to minister to the sexual needs of their young boys." Several weeks ago one might have heard a voice of protest against such indecencies in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, but that small, still voice of German Liberalism, too, is silenced now. Instead, the *Angriff*, the official organ of the Nazi Minister for Culture and Propaganda, has joined the *Stürmer*; so has also the *Weltkampf*, the mouthpiece of Herr Alfred Rosenberg, Hitler's personal confidant, and a host of other Nazi newspapers. Altogether these have now raised a new anti-Semitic hue and cry, the like of which has not been heard in Germany since the first hectic days of Nazism.

Nor is the drive limited only to press propaganda. The unofficial anti-Jewish boycott has been revived with a force not known since April, 1933. The Streicher method of hounding personally every German who has any dealings with a Jew is being introduced into the whole of Bavaria and the entire Reich. The so-called "racial science," which is the Nazi name for anti-Semitism, has been made a compulsory course of study in all the elementary schools of Germany. Herr Frick, the Prussian Minister of Interior, in an interview given to the press, foreshadows that the new Nazi Constitution will deprive the Jews of their civil rights. Even Herr Blank of the "concordat" fame has gone out of his way to deliver another speech on the Jewish question, this time to representative publishers in Berlin, whom he blamed for not having cleared their industry of Jews as thoroughly as the other German industries and professions. In short, Jews in Germany, who for some time were left in peace, are now facing once more a new anti-Semitic drive with all the ferocity, pitilessness and brutality of the drive which shook the world two years ago.

A LONDON DIARY

RECENT events in Europe have produced some remarkable changes in the British press. While the anti-Sovietism of the Rothermere papers has reached the point of complete hysteria, the *Daily Telegraph* has for almost the first time begun to talk sensibly about Russia and has expressed approbation of our new (and I suspect not too secure) solidarity with Stalin. The most interesting change is in Mr. Garvin, who has, in the past, devoted gallons of ink to denouncing those who want this country to commit itself too definitely to a full League policy. "Sanctions" used to be anathema to him. Now he is attacking the Government for its hesitations, and in last week's *Observer* brought off a couple of really admirable gibes.

> But what if Herr Hitler in future should commit further and more perilous violations of the Peace Treaties? What then? Well, British policy may be firmly depended upon up to a point. In such a case our Government will be of the opinion, and perhaps of the strong opinion, that somebody else should tell Germany's mother.

Better still is his characterisation of Sir John Simon:

> Our Foreign Secretary once more created a curious impression—that of a man who marks time with an agility meant to look like walking.

* * *

We have lived a safe life so long in England—even the war did not disturb us—that English people simply do not credit stories of Nazi terrorism and kidnapping in this country. Yet I have two examples before me, both of them on first-hand authority, where the tactics which have been successfully used in the case of Dr. Jacob have been attempted in England. In each case a series of letters, supposedly from a friend, have been written to well-known German refugees suggesting that if they went to a place near the Swiss frontier they would receive important information. On the Continent such tricks are generally understood to be part of Nazi tactics. When I was in the Saar recently there was the case of workers distributing anti-Nazi literature who were decoyed over the frontier and arrested. And although official protests were made they were still in prison when I left. It is about time that we learnt in England the lesson which should surely have been clear after the events of June 30th and after the *Putsch* in Austria, the murder of Dollfuss and the recent murder trial in Memel. We are confronted with a new type of problem—people in high places with absolute authority whose mentality is that of Chicago gangsters.

* * *

A friend who has just returned from Ireland has been talking to me about the Dublin strike. He was surprised by the extraordinary calmness—almost indifference, it seemed—with which the public in general put up with their inconvenience. For something over six weeks no trams or buses have been running in the city (except a few long distance coaches which are not concerned in the dispute). The suburban trains, of course, carry a good many passengers; there has been an enormous pullulation of push bikes, and owners of private cars are generous in giving lifts. Some of the "lifted," it seems, are exacting in their demands. I was told of a lady who was driven three or four miles into the middle of the city. The driver stopped at his office, where he had urgent business; but the lady refused to get out. She wanted to go to Kildare Street, she said, and to Kildare Street she would be driven, though it was only six or seven minutes' walk. Eventually she alighted, took the number of the car, and declared that she would report the owner to the police! There has been no attempt at blacklegging, and the strikers themselves have had little fault to find with the Government for the not very extensive service of army lorries it has put on to help carry the crowds to and from their work. Meanwhile all efforts to bring the parties together to negotiate a settlement (of which the latest has been made by the Speaker of the Dail) have proved unsuccessful. It looks like a war of attrition, in which the Company forgoes its profits while the Unions' funds are being steadily eaten up in strike pay. But the men are not at the end of their resources; they have a good case, and the employers may yet be induced to modify their present intransigent attitude.

* * *

The open Sessions of the Royal Commission on the Private Manufacture of Arms in this country, which should begin early next month, can scarcely fail to be interesting. We may expect to hear an ex-Minister of Munitions explaining how hopelessly inefficient and costly private manufacture proved in wartime. It was not until armaments were nationalised that any check could be imposed upon profiteering in munitions or any swift expansion obtained. We may also expect to hear munition makers defending themselves against the charges brought against them in the U.D.C.'s *Secret International and Patriotism, Ltd.*, in Miss Freda White's League of Nations Union pamphlet on the same subject, and in *Arms and the Man*, the remarkable article which was originally published in *Fortune*, and which is now published in pamphlet form by Doubleday, Doran and Co. It had a great deal to do with creating the opinion which led to the American arms inquiry. I should be particularly interested to see what British manufacturers have to say about the letters which were produced in that inquiry. But I am not surprised that British armament interests have welcomed the Commission. Without powers to examine their books or correspondence, the Commission, which consists of worthy and elderly people without the least expert knowledge about arms traffic, can scarcely produce a report which anyone can take seriously.

* * *

Long ago when I was still young enough to be highbrow, I used to be sniffy about P. G. Wodehouse. But I have changed all that. I have occasional moods when he seems the only possible author. I was in just such a mood when I came upon his new book, *Blandings Castle* (Jenkins, 7*s.* 6*d.*). Life became bearable and even for a time enjoyable. This world of inconsequent ne'er-do-wells, gorgeous girls and comic peers is farther from reality than detective stories or thrillers. Indeed, thrillers which were once an imaginative relief in monotonous lives are to-day much less exciting than morning newspapers. But the real point about P.G. is his genius for phrases. His gems of absurdity leap out of the page. I had never myself thought of a man "wincing like a salted snail" nor can I think of a better sentence to introduce an unusual situation than the following: "the reactions of a country house-party at an after-dinner dog fight in the drawing room always vary considerably according to the individual natures of its members." But my favourite character in this book is described as "the type of girl who is seen in back streets carrying a baby nearly as large as herself and still retaining sufficient energy to lead one little brother by the hand and shout recriminations at another in the distance." That is genuine observation.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. M. M. Russell.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

> Germany's attempt to bluff the world by raising the spectre of a dominant German navy, army, and air force is shattered by an arresting article which Viscount Castlerosse will contribute to to-morrow's *Daily Express.—Evening Standard.*

> *The Dark Hours*, by Don Marquis. Premier performance in England, this Passion Play will be performed during Holy Week, with a special performance on the evening of Good Friday. To dissociate the voice of Jesus that is heard throughout the Play from the physique of any particular person, Mr. Langford has engaged a special actor with a lovely voice, who will be entirely unknown throughout the rehearsals and performances by either the actors or the audience, as it has been decided to make a special cloak and hood to cover him completely from the time he enters the stage door until he leaves it again. This actor has contracted not to make himself known during his stay in York.—*Theatre Leaflet.*

May I point out that those who accept the excellent suggestion of Professor Tonks that all who attend the service in St. Paul's should come, "the men in the most splendid dress they are entitled to wear, and the ladies decked with all that will bring out their beauty," will find support for their action in the familiar words of Psalm 29, verse 2, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" as translated by Professor James Moffatt, "Worship the Eternal in festal attire"? —Letter in *Times*.

"The book deals," said the Attorney-General, "with what everybody will recognise as an unsavory subject—gratification of sexual appetite."—*Daily Sketch*.

"I am sick to death of all the tripe that is being talked about disarmament, the League of Nations, and everything else of that nature," said Vice-Adm. W. D. Church, C.B.E., who was aboard the *Asturias*.
"The bigger the navy and the forces, the better for the whole world," he added.
"I know nothing about the Singapore Naval Base," he remarked, replying to another question. "All I think is that it is a darned good thing to have, and it should be maintained—at any price."—*Straits Budget*.

Sir John Foster Fraser, writing on the Race, says that Oxford's persistent defeat is due to Cambridge taking a more serious view of life, while Oxford's impulse is to be scholastically flippant and cynical.—*Malvern Gazette*.

MARKETING SCHEMES

[In the following article the Minister of Agriculture in the latter part of the second Labour Government replies to Mr. G. L. Schwartz's article in our issue of March 30. He also shows that Labour's agricultural policy differs on vital points from the present Government's agricultural policy discussed by Mr. L. F. Easterbrook in our issue of March 9.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

THE article by Mr. Easterbrook on Milk in your issue of March 9, and the consequent contribution on Marketing Schemes by Mr. Schwartz on March 30, present an interesting and instructive contrast between the points of view of the man who is struggling with real difficulties and of one who is a detached critic.

We have been told that the onlooker sees most of the game. It would not be so if the onlooker equipped himself with blinkers or looked through field glasses from the wrong end, which I am afraid is what Mr. Schwartz did. I can honestly say, as the one who was responsible for the Marketing Act of 1931, that I read his article with a real anxiety to discover whether he had any new or better plan to suggest in the light of the experiences of the past three years. He sees all the inequalities, all the incongruities, of the present situation and recites them in various forms and with evident satisfaction.

It reminded me that often in days past, when I occupied a position of responsibility, I was disappointed at the little help that was obtainable from economists. Problems and difficulties force themselves upon you every day. You have to find some sort of answer to the question "What am I to do about it?" So far as I can gather any indication of policy from Mr. Schwartz's article, it is "Scrap the lot." "Let things rip." In fact, go back to the old glorious mess in which a multitude of scattered producers at the one end, and consumers at the other, were at the mercy of organised distributors who were making the best use they could of a system under which they pay the producers as little as possible and charge the consumers as much as possible.

So far as agriculture is concerned—what is the case to be dealt with? Substantially it is this. For a long time past there has been a steady drain of people from employment on the land, and great areas of good land are only half used or not used at all. Much of it is exceptionally well suited to the production of foodstuffs that the people need. The climate is favourable and there is the best food market in the world within a short distance of every farm.

Apart from other requirements, I suggest that we can never obtain the best use of the land unless we can fashion a price and marketing system that will secure for the producer a reliable and decent standard of life and transfer the product to the consumer with no greater increase in the price than an efficient and economical marketing system requires. This necessarily involves the preparation and presentation of commodities to the market in an acceptable form and in the orderly manner required. Moreover, it is impossible to establish any reliable price system or secure the adoption of standards that will provide a continued incentive to improvements unless there is an adequate measure of control over supplies.

In connection with this statement of principal considerations it should be said that those of us who are associated with the Labour Party repudiate entirely a system that attaches such importance to cheapness that our people would either have to be competitors with coolie labour or be driven out of employment. If an industry is one that our needs and natural conditions indicate should be carried on, then we should so manage our price and currency systems that it could be conducted on a self-respecting basis—of which efficiency is necessarily a condition—and the purchasing power of the people should be in accord therewith.

The two previous articles were concerned chiefly with milk, which presents an excellent case for examination because there is no doubt that people require milk—much more indeed than they now consume—and our land is well suited for its production.

Now the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1931 was the first step—and only the first step—in creating necessary machinery for the purposes already indicated. It was designed to lead to commodity marketing organisations that would be capable of dealing with home-produced supplies. If it had not been for the change of Government in 1931 it would have been followed by proposals for dealing equally comprehensively, in terms of commodities or groups of commodities, with imported supplies and with the processes of distribution.

Many of the difficulties now being experienced, and which Mr. Schwartz complains of, are due to the absence of proper machinery for dealing with distribution and the appalling waste and needless increase in price that now exist between the producer and the consumer. The various devices of quantitative regulation, quotas and tariffs that have been resorted to during the past three and a half years had failed because there has not been, and is not now, any control over the processes of distribution. Their purpose, ostensibly, was to secure a certain standard of price for the producer, but, in the absence of any machinery for seeing that he got it, their effect was to increase distributors' profits and retail prices until they depressed demand. The benefit intended was not received by the farmer. In the absence also of machinery to control distribution the same has already occurred in the case of the subsidy intended for beef producers.

With regard to milk, the main depressing influence—and the one chiefly responsible for the difficulties now being experienced—is the fact that retail prices are so unnecessarily greater than producers' prices. Distribution costs are usually a shilling a gallon, and sometimes more, so that milk often doubles in price between the producer and the consumer. An improved standard of milk is doubtless most important and confidence in quality is very influential in stimulating demand, but the main reason why people do not buy as much milk as they ought—and as they would soon wish to—is because they cannot afford to pay for it.

It is this limitation on the use of milk for liquid consumption that, working backwards, produces the "surplus" milk disposed of at the unremunerative prices shown in the table quoted by Mr. Schwartz. There is nothing new in this disorder. It has existed for many years, and to an even greater extent. The only new thing is that there is now in existence an organisation that can reveal the facts in an authoritative way and apparently inform "an economist," for the first time, of their existence.

Parenthetically, it is to be noted that the Milk Board has at least been able to sell *all* the milk for human food in some form or other, even if some of it has had to be disposed of at ridiculously low prices. Formerly it was often the case that pro-

ducers could not find a buyer for all their milk in the flush season and had to waste some of it.

In the absence of any machinery for dealing with distribution in a rational way, the Milk Board, having to sell the milk to distributors, found itself entangled in agreements about retail prices, as a condition of selling the milk, which, in my view, it should never have been a party to. The result has been that in many areas distributors have got away with even greater charges than ever before, and all the opprobrium has been directed at the Milk Board. Their business is with producers' prices and not with retail prices; and the need—so strikingly revealed in the recent Report of the Consumers' Committee on this subject—is for the creation of machinery for introducing order and eliminating waste and excessive charges in the processes of distribution. Instead of milk being sold at seven pence a quart it would be perfectly possible, under a well-ordered system, to sell it at five pence and still pay a remunerative price to the producer. If this were done demand would immediately expand, and much of the "surplus" that is now complained of would disappear like a mist in the morning.

An increased demand would no doubt incite a further increase in production and thereby provide an additional reason for that planning of agricultural development which those of us who have had a share in formulating the Labour Party's policy regard as essential. It is equally required on the factory side of milk-product production and in the proper use of factory "residues," as it is in many other directions.

In any case we can be sure that present-day experiences are increasingly revealing the necessity of dealing effectively with the waste and desolating effects of the existing system of distribution, which presses unfairly upon producer and consumer alike.

CHRISTOPHER ADDISON

HOT COPPERS

IT is announced that the Anglesey Hunt Ball is to be revived this month, and that what is described as "the time-honoured copper throwing ceremony" will probably be observed. This means that during the progress of the ball the Lady Patroness will shovel five pounds' worth of hot coppers from the balcony of the hotel which is to be the scene of the night's festivities "on to the dense crowd below." "The juveniles for miles around forgather at Beaumaris to take part in the scramble."

Now everybody loves a scramble. Scrambling for pennies was a popular diversion till the invention of the motor-car killed it. In the old days of horse-traction every waggonette-load of holiday-makers was assailed by children screaming for pennies and willing to engage in a rough and tumble on the road for the possession of any coin flung to them by the occupants of the waggonette. Everybody enjoyed it. The driver might flick his whip at the clamorous infants, but he enjoyed flicking his whip at them. There might be mean men among the others in the waggonette—men who would have grudged a penny to the wives of their bosoms—but, as the infection of the penny-throwing spread, they, too, found themselves seized by an uncontrollable impulse to shower pennies to the poor and rejoicing hilariously in the spectacle of urchins rolling over each other on the road and fighting manfully to get hold of as many of the pennies as possible. To fling money about like this gave the humblest man present the sensation of being a king throwing largesse. He was as happy as Father Christmas, doing good and having fun at the same time. As for the children, it cannot be doubted that they also enjoyed the scramble. They were not forced by parents or school-teachers to run after waggonettes shouting. They rolled each other on the ground as voluntarily as youths maul each other on the Rugby football field. This admirable custom, I imagine, would have gone on for ever, if some Victorian killjoy had not invented the motor-engine. When the motor car made the ordinary roads more dangerous than railroads for infantile sports and pastimes, it was no longer possible to throw pennies to be scrambled for by children, except at peril to their lives. There are motorists who would not have worried about that, but the police objected, and to-day, I believe, it is an offence against the law to fling a penny at a child from a charabanc.

I wonder who it was who first had the notion that, if you threw pennies into a crowd of scrambling children, it would be better fun if the pennies burnt the children's fingers. I think it must have been the aesthetic Nero. It was an ingenious idea that, by taking a little pains, men could enjoy at the same time the pleasures of kindness and the pleasures of cruelty. It was as if a loving parent, when filling the Christmas stocking, were to mix a few drawing pins with the contents of the stocking, so that the child, greedily groping for a tangerine orange, would suddenly utter a yelp as a finger came in contact with the point of a pin. One of the minor pleasures of life is to see people surprised, and pins have long been used as instruments of surprise. I know an artist who says that it was one of his happiest experiences to see a French customs official pricking his fingers on drawing-pins as he was rummaging unseemlily through his luggage. He had told the official that he had nothing to declare, but the Frenchman would not believe him and insisted on his exposing the shabby contents of his bag. Shame at sight of the pyjamas gave way to joy, however, when the Frenchman uttered a cry and popped a stuck finger into his mouth. The artist, being an untidy person, had tossed his drawing-pins loosely into his bag, never dreaming that he had discovered the ideal way of punishing the inquisitiveness of customs officials. The Frenchman, stung to fury, was now determined to catch the artist out. Throwing the pin that had pricked him away, he renewed his investigations below the shirts when two more drawing-pins pierced him and he jumped a foot into the air, trying to shake his fist and to suck it at the same time. His French became so rapid as he addressed the artist that the artist could not understand him. Possibly, he was using words that no decent person could be expected to understand. Losing all interest in the contents of the bag, he concentrated on the artist, glaring, shouting and fist-shaking, till he was reduced to silence by exhaustion. In the end, he mopped his brow and made a feeble gesture which meant that the artist was to close his bag and take the accursed thing away—to the infernal regions, if possible. This happened a number of years ago, but the artist has still only to think of it in moments of depression in order to feel happy.

I am not sure that his happiness is morally justifiable. He enjoys in retrospect only the pleasure of revenge and the pleasure of cruelty. I doubt whether cruelty to customs officials is legitimate unless it is mixed with a measure of kindness. If the Frenchman, for instance, on hurriedly withdrawing his hand, had found, not only a drawing-pin sticking in one of his fingers, but a hundred-franc note caught in the others, in what different language, with what a different countenance, he would have addressed the artist. He would have addressed him in the language of Racine, not of the gutter. His face would have been an April day—shadows magically chased away by sunshine. He and the artist would have laughed together over the fun of the pin-pricking. He would have re-enacted the comedy to his wife when he got home, putting his hand cautiously among the contents of an imaginary bag, withdrawing it with a shriek, sucking his wounded finger, and then—oh, joy!—discovering that he was clutching a hundred-franc note. Even a good man, it seems to me, might enjoy remembering a scene of that kind, for it is a scene in which the comedy of charity triumphs over the comedy of cruelty.

Might a good man not also enjoy hiding pins in a Christmas stocking, and listening outside the door for the surprised cry of the child as it brought back its hand, not only with a pinprick, but with a box of Carlsbad plums? If the child were warned in advance that Father Christmas usually put pins as well as presents in the stocking, is there one child in a thousand whose heart would not beat with a livelier excitement as it cautiously felt in the dangerous depths of the stocking

for the presents! I agree that the idea is repellent, but that is because the parent would be enjoying himself, not because the child would not be enjoying itself. The existence of the game of snapdragon proves that human beings like the risk of being slightly hurt if the pain is accompanied by a compensating pleasure. The fact that the hot raisins have to be snatched from a dish of burning brandy makes the game exciting. Even the most confirmed raisin-eater experiences a new pleasure as he goes through the ordeal by fire in order to obtain the beloved fruit. Even the raisin-hater, indeed, loves the particular raisin that he has plucked from the dish at such peril to his fingers. And no one calls the game cruel, because all present, young and old, equally take part in it.

If I have doubts about the game of scrambling for hot coppers, it is because all present, young and old, do not equally take part in it. I have no doubt that the children enjoy it, but I am not sure that their elders have the right to enjoy it unless they, too, scramble in the street and have their fingers burnt by the hot pennies. Let the day, indeed, be set apart in Beaumaris for jokes of the kind. Let the waiters in the hotel bring the members of the hunt their change in coins so hot that even the most courteous colonel, as he touches them, will cry aloud and break out into horrible imprecations in the presence of the ladies. Let fire-hot plates be handed to the ladies at tea, and let the waiters laugh as the plates are dropped, with a shriek, to the floor. Let the cook throw pepper and mustard recklessly into the soup, so that with the first spoonful every diner will get the surprise of his life. These would be barbarian delights, and, if the children were brought in from the street to see the fun, they would laugh at every evidence of a burnt finger or a burning throat till the tears rolled down their cheeks.

I doubt, however, whether any of these things will happen. I doubt even whether, in these spoilsport humanitarian days, the pennies will be really hot. The age of barbarism is fading. Practical jokes are unpopular. Snapdragon itself is out of fashion. If it were not for politics, one would almost think at times that the world was becoming civilised. Y. Y.

Correspondence

THE MEMEL TRIAL

SIR,—In your article about Memel it was stated that: "The affair of the Nazi conspirators whom the Lithuanians have sentenced to death or imprisonment is merely an aggravation of a political problem already acute."

It appears to me necessary to point out that it was not the "conspirators" who were sentenced to death, but the Nazi Feme murderers. The "conspirators" were only sentenced to more or less severe sentences of imprisonment. In this letter I do not wish to discuss the justification of the principle of the death sentence. I wish merely to point out the facts of the murder which were not dealt with in your article, as otherwise a false impression will be made on British public opinion—a similar impression to that which the Nazis have deliberately fostered in Germany, in order to whip up a hatred of Lithuania among uninformed Germans.

Who was the only victim in Lithuania? The court official Jesuttis of Memel. This man was a member of two Nazi organisations which were formed in Memel after Hitler's advent to power, and had journeyed to Germany for negotiations with Berlin party circles. Later, as a witness before examining magistrates, Jesuttis made a statement which showed up the prevarications of a party comrade. Among the Nazis of Memel the report was spread that Jesuttis had "betrayed" the movement. The German Vice-Consul Dr. Strack, of the Consulate General of Germany in Memel, heard these reports, and remarked: "And is this man still alive?" After that Jesuttis was only alive for a few days. A certain Moser, who was "Commissar for the Memel Territory" in the Tilsit office of the Nazi party, took the affair in hand. On March 23rd, 1934, Jesuttis was taken out in a car by party members, and according to the rules of the Feme, "bumped-off." A few weeks later his body was recovered from the River Jura, about 75 miles from Memel. Jesuttis left a wife and two young children. The Nazi indignation against the proceedings in Lithuania was naturally not kindled by the Jesuttis case. The Reich attorney Dr. Frank, the one who was not unconcerned in the murder for private revenge of the Munich lawyer Alfred Strauss, in March, 1933, as was revealed in sworn testimony at the Paris inquiry committee, naturally appealed all the more to "the judicial conscience of the whole world," as the court martial at Kaunas sentenced the four murderers of Jesuttis to death.

It should further be observed that the trial was conducted with all the usages customary in civilised countries. The proceedings lasted from December 14, 1934, to March 27, 1935. No hindrance was placed in the way of the defence of the accused. The best counsel in Lithuania were at their disposal. Not for a minute did the court exclude the public. None of the accused or their counsel was cut short, nor was the summoning of defence witnesses refused. None was, as has happened in German trials, ordered out of the court-room as a punishment for a vigorous defence, nor were their lives threatened by Ministers who appeared as witnesses. (Göring-Dimitroff.)

The sentences are doubtless severe. But in Nazi Germany similar crimes are punished far more severely, and, further, in Memel the sentenced men have the good fortune to be able to lodge an appeal, which will without a doubt be more mercifully dealt with than was the case with the beheaded Frau von Berg and Fräulein von Natzmer.

The thirty-five men who were acquitted were allowed to leave the court building as free men after the judgment. There was no official of the Secret Police to take them into "protective custody," or a concentration camp, as has happened in Germany.

ERNST TOLLER

PROVIDENT CHECKS

SIR,—The article in your current issue on provident checks brought back unpleasant memories. Perhaps a few of my own experiences would not be without interest.

At the end of September, 1930, I was thrown out of employment. I had been employed by a firm of marine insurance brokers, and for varying causes, partly my own fault I fear, I was dismissed. However, after about three weeks I obtained employment through the influence of a very worthy gentleman with a very large multiple furnishing stores largely selling goods by hire-purchase. After about two weeks I was given a number of addresses and instructed to call and get what money I could, and not to take "no" for an answer. I was paid 30*s*. per week. In addition to this I received 1*s*. a call for making inquiries about prospective customers for an associated company. Before Christmas and Easter I received as much as 30*s*. from this source alone, but usually it amounted only to 2*s*. or 3*s*., and often nothing. I was twenty years of age. I was working from an east-end branch and made reports to head office every Thursday morning. If the reports were not good enough the secretary would come in and swear and blind, in an endeavour to alarm us. Any new collectors were always in a nerve-racked condition when at H.O. The older collectors were more hardened, and accomplished bullies themselves. The secretary's efforts to "harden" me extended to sacking me and giving me another chance on my next call, or else 'phoning to the branch to that effect. To tell the truth, when I was "sacked" I didn't care a damn, I was so sick of the sordid business, and it was only the fear of losing the dole that prevented me from giving notice. We were instructed to bully and threaten the removal of the furniture. But the most depressing side of this life was the visiting the homes of decent bodies desperately poor, and obviously unable to pay; yet knowing, that if they were not bullied, I would be when I reported. . . . I'm afraid I was not always unselfish. Most of the collectors, however, were tyrants in their own right—perhaps I would have been too, had I stuck it longer. It is difficult to understand how one can fail to be passionately Socialist on close association with really hard working people who ought never to need the things my presence showed they could not afford. The number of dishonest and lazy debtors was exceedingly low—not more than 2 per cent.; and this in the East End. I visited Canning Town (what ghastly turnings there are off Rathbone Street!), Limehouse, Bethnal Green, Stepney, Isle of Dogs, and as far out as Leytonstone, Epping, and Manor House. I found twenty calls a day about usual, but often there were more, and I worked from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Quite as frequently, however, I spent the afternoon in a cinema.

I felt all this sordid life, and the association with poverty, eating into me; people remarked upon it. It lasted until August, 1931, when I plucked up courage and asked when I was going to learn salesmanship, as I had been promised. The secretary told me this was part of my training. However that may have been I was shortly afterwards transferred to another branch, as an assistant in the shop at 35s. per week. To my disgust I was again sent out collecting. After about a fortnight I saw one of the directors and asked for a change. He offered me another area for collecting! I refused. They sacked me. I was out of work for six months except for a short spell of two weeks.

I remarked on the difficulty of understanding how one could not be a Socialist in such circumstances. And yet it was so! I was the most ardent of Conservatives and patriots, and eagerly supported the National Conservative candidate in 1931. It was not until I came to work among the possessing classes, and witnessed the vices among the monied unemployed, and found them to be the same as the vices of the destitute leisured classes that I became a convinced Socialist. FRANK S. WATSON

LIBEL

SIR,—As Mr. J. C. Powys pointed out last week, the fear of libel should be the first consideration of any wise young author in choosing the locus and characters of his book. The lurking shadow of unintentional defamation is a constant harsh and unreasonable censor on all honest written matter in this country, and a general abnegation of the theory of "freedom of speech" to the middle classes.

The last two words are used advisedly, because the wealthy can afford to suppress criticism by expensive litigation, and the very poor on the other hand can always obtain some booty by the threat of bringing proceedings that will cost the defendant a large sum, extending possibly to hundreds, to defend in any event.

The reason for my letter, however, is to disabuse any reader's mind of an impression that may be gained from Mr. Garratt's letter last week. For he seems to have failed to appreciate the value of the defence commonly called "fair comment on a matter of public importance."

This hole in the far flung net of the law of libel has saved many a fat fish from the toils of the law. So wide is its interpretation by the Courts that it in fact frequently allows most unfair comment on matters that are not really of public importance. When comment, however critical, is made upon anything which can remotely be said to be a matter of public importance it is necessary only to raise this plea, and the plaintiff must show that the commentator had an unfair state of mind, no easy matter in an English law court with our strict rules of evidence.

It is not necessary, as Mr. Garratt seems to suggest, for the critic to establish that his criticism is true or justifiable. "Fair comment on a matter of public importance" may be a biting, and to the reader, clearly unfair, criticism of the acts of a Minister of State, or of a literary work or play, advertisement or work of art. In fact this hole in the libel net can be used by any commercial interest to strangle a young writer or painter at his first appearance. The innermost secrets of any one who may be said to be a man or woman of any public originality can be and frequently are most grossly caricatured in the press and elsewhere, and the only chance of successful defence is a public action in the courts, with a grave risk that it may be impossible to show that the defendant had an unfair state of mind. It is in these cases that the criminal law should be tightened up and more easily put in motion; especially when the criticism is levelled against a political party whose aims are thought to be inimical to the newspaper Lords.

For the rest, as in most of our law, reduction of cost, simplification and the introduction of contemporary morality is needed.

7 New Square, W.C.2. AMBROSE E. APPELBE

VOLUNTARY HOSPITALS

SIR,—As one who has had exceptional opportunity of meeting, on friendly and candid terms, patients on their discharge from London voluntary hospitals—seeing some of these almost every week during the past thirty years—I think it may interest your readers to learn what is the general feeling of these poor people (for whose service the hospitals are primarily intended), who, themselves, are too illiterate or too modest to write letters to THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. I believe I am within the mark if I say that ninety-nine out of every hundred of these patients have spontaneously, or when asked "How did you like it there?", expressed nothing but praise, appreciation and respect for the way they have been treated by everyone. The hospitals of which most of these patients of mine have been inmates are two of our largest—The London and St. Bartholomew's. When I contrast the conditions which these—for the most part gravely ill—men, women and children have to "put up with" in a big London hospital, including its routine and tidiness (to which so many of your correspondents object), with the conditions which those who do not go to hospital suffer in their tenement homes, tended by their well-meaning but untrained and undisciplined friends and relations, I can understand the alacrity with which my patients usually accept my advice to go to hospital.

That there are many possible and desirable reforms in hospital detail, it would, of course, be foolish to deny; but the same applies to my own home and to my own habits.

63 Harford Street, E.1. HARRY ROBERTS

SIR,—I should like to support my friend, Mr. Sidney Dark, in his defence of hospitals and hospital treatment. I speak, however, from first-hand experience, as, unlike the majority of hospital patients, I happen to belong to the more articulate classes. I have twice been an in-patient in one of our largest London hospitals; and, being at the time just within the income limit, I was admitted to a public ward. I cannot speak highly enough of the care and attention—not only purely technical, but human—which I received from nurses, staff and fellow-patients. I will admit that, as I shared the ward with some twenty or thirty other women, all with social rights equal with my own, I did not expect its routine, ventilation, lighting, meals, etc., to be altered to suit my individual tastes. But, even with this reservation, I have nothing but admiration and gratitude for my treatment throughout. The bed opposite to mine, on one occasion, contained a born grouser, despised and disliked by all the ward, nurses and patients alike; but I never saw her spoken to crossly, or any one of her hundred demands neglected. We all breathed more freely when she was removed, still grumbling, to a convalescent home. There, perhaps, she spent her leisure writing letters to the papers?

The Polytechnic Institute, Regent Street, W.1. WINIFRED L. STAMP

SIR,—Mr. Gerald Barry is quite right when he stresses the importance of finance as a cause of the faults of the present-day hospitals.

The municipal hospitals are under the control of professional administrators, many of whom fully realise the defects which exist at present, but they are unable to make any radical change without increasing the cost.

They are not sentimental about their jobs. They do not regard the patients as the recipients of charity who should keep quiet and be thankful. They consider that the hospital is selling service and they like to give as good value as possible. If the patients are not satisfied, they are entitled to complain without provoking resentment.

The principle that "the customer is always right" is not invariably accepted, but at least it is certain that full consideration will be given to the customer's case.

The staffs of the municipal hospitals are eager to raise the quality of the service and will do so just as soon as more money is available.

The worst faults are due to shortage of staff. In most hospitals the nursing staff should be doubled and the kitchen staff trebled. With efficient administration working on a large scale this could be done without raising the average cost per head per week to an outrageous figure. The basic charge for any patient should not be much more than the average. The principle of Robin Hood, by which the rich are robbed to help the poor, or those who can pay something are overcharged because some can pay nothing, should be abandoned and the whole thing placed on a business footing.

Walton Hospital, Rice Lane, Liverpool 9. HENRY H. MACWILLIAM, Medical Superintendent

A SCHOOL PROBLEM

SIR,—May I comment upon the letter from Professor Reilly published in your issue of 23rd March last. While I am not in a position to controvert his criticism of present housing conditions in blocks of tenements erected in Islington fifty years ago, I wish to refute the implications of his letter so far as they reflect adversely upon the educational standards adopted in the London area.

London was early in the field. As regards building schools it

experimented, and it now finds, and is glad to find, that aftercomers have profited by its experimental work. Moreover, when the first rush of building to meet the urgent needs of compulsory education was over, the School Board began to revise its standards and modify its buildings.

Since the London County Council has been responsible for London education great improvements in school planning have been made. For example, since 1925, forty-three new schools have been built and twenty-three old and unsatisfactory buildings have been extensively remodelled or entirely rebuilt. In the three years, 1935–1938, the Council proposes to deal with forty school buildings where conditions require major structural alterations amounting in nearly all cases to complete rebuilding. In addition, it is the intention of the Council to overhaul and modernise on a systematic basis the remaining schools where conditions are not so unfavourable as to require destruction of fabric.

What is wrong with comparisons, such as that which Prof. Reilly makes with school buildings in Germany, Austria or Liverpool, arises from the very natural tendency to contrast the best elsewhere with the average or even the worst in one's own area. A glance at the standard planning for new schools recently laid down by the Council would, I think, reassure your correspondent.

I am afraid that I am not prepared to accept the view that the system extolled by Prof. Reilly, whereby a teacher remains with the same class throughout the junior school course, is necessarily best. That is often very undesirable, and has, in fact, been discarded by many highly experienced teachers. Head-teachers in London schools have, however, a large measure of freedom in the organisation of their departments, and there is nothing to prevent a head-mistress adopting this method if it is found best suited to the needs of the children.

Reductions of staff are not made in the promiscuous way suggested. Twice a year the staff of each school is reviewed and reductions are made only where a fall in the number of children makes such a reduction reasonable. Since 1925 the school roll in London has fallen by about 100,000, and Prof. Reilly will not, I think, expect the aggregate staff of teachers to be the same.

The fate of the displaced assistant teacher is not quite that described by Prof. Reilly. It is true that she is transferred to the "unattached" list and receives full pay, but she does not spend her time in the divisional office; her services are fully used in filling vacancies on the staff of other schools.

The reduction in the size of classes throughout London has been one of the most consistent aims of the education authority. In 1874 the average number of children per teacher in London was about eighty-five. By 1900 this had fallen to forty-three; it is now below thirty. In 1925 over 20 per cent. of classes contained more than fifty children; in the present year such classes are practically non-existent; only 44 per cent. of the classes in London have over forty children per teacher, a figure which compares favourably with the provincial county boroughs where the figure reaches 55 per cent.

In conclusion, I may assure your correspondent that his information to the effect that "all over London" there are children in the schools without a seat is incorrect. There are several other comments which I should have wished to make, but I have refrained in order to keep this letter to reasonable dimensions.

The County Hall, London, S.E.1. EVELINE M. LOWE, Chairman of the Education Committee, London County Council.

FAMINE IN RUSSIA?

SIR,—I spent seven months in the U.S.S.R. during the winter of 1932–33, when the famine was at its worst. For the greater part of the time I was in Vladivostok, where I was teaching English. The staple diet of the population was substitute bread, made largely from soya beans, and hot water slightly coloured to resemble tea; this was varied occasionally with cabbage soup. There was never sufficient bread to give every ration card holder his share. First come first served was the rule, and the bread queues began to form at 3 a.m. at a time when the temperature was between twenty and thirty degrees below zero, though the shops did not open until 9. On the open market meat sold at 50 roubles a kilo, eggs at 5 roubles apiece, rotten potatoes at a rouble each. With the exception of the two Intourist hotels, where a poor meal cost from 30 to 50 roubles, every restaurant in the city closed down before the end of January. In addition to the food shortage there was a dearth of all kinds of fuel. Only highly privileged people could get coal or logs, and kerosene was strictly rationed. The wooden sidewalks of the streets were torn up during the night, and fences and gates disappeared in a mysterious manner.

Horses dropped dead in the shafts and were eaten by the privileged few, but very few people died directly from starvation. Hunger weakened their resistance to disease, and they succumbed to the typhus, known significantly as the "hunger fever." I was told that the deaths from typhus in the city averaged forty per day, but I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the figure.

In May I shared a room in a Moscow hotel with a Russian engineer from Sverdlovsk, who told me that conditions in that town were similar to my description of Vladivostok. There was an epidemic of typhus in Moscow caused by an influx of beggars from the famine areas. Travellers from all parts told the same story of food shortage and typhus. There can be no doubt that the famine was not limited to the Ukraine and the North Caucasus, where its effects were catastrophic, but was severe throughout the U.S.S.R., with the exception of Moscow and Leningrad, which, though suffering far more than did England or Germany in 1918, were kept reasonably well supplied by the standards then prevailing in Russia. Nor was the famine caused by inadequate transport facilities as Mrs. Webb suggested. It was due in the first place to the opposition of the peasants to collectivisation and the inefficiency of those responsible for the process, and secondly to the determination of the Soviet Government to meet foreign commitments by exporting everything available, no matter what the cost in terms of human life. The Five Year Plan, conceived in 1927 and commenced in 1928, was based on the wholesale prices then ruling for the staple exports of the U.S.S.R. When the slump came the prices of Russian exports fell far more sharply than the prices of the machinery of which they defrayed the cost, and the Plan was never modified to meet this unforeseen emergency. Hence, in part, the famine.

E. J. EVANS

East Lynne, Temple Street, Llandrindod Wells.

SIR,—One of your correspondents, Mr. Edgar C. Willis, takes objection to my use of the year 1913 as a basis with which to compare the grain crops of the last three years in Russia. My answer to him is simply that this is the year which the Soviet Government itself uses for this purpose in "The Soviet Union Looks Ahead" (page 251), from which I took the figures for 1913 and 1932.

But my point remains untouched, viz., that with 30,000,000 more inhabitants, with 15,100,000,000 roubles* spent on the development of agriculture during the First Five Year Plan, and with "agro-technique" being taught (?) throughout the land, the last three years show a smaller crop yield as compared with the *primitive* days of 1913, whether a good or a bad year, and, as compared with the planned quantity, there is a shortage of about 100,000,000 tons for that period.

MARCUS SAMUEL

House of Commons.

* (See page 291 of *The Fulfilment of the First Five-Year Plan*).

THE STATUS OF INDIA

SIR,—In the recent discussion in Committee as to whether or not there should be a Preamble to the India Bill declaring the policy of Parliament regarding the ultimate Constitutional Status of India, Colonel Wedgwood saw fit to make the following remarks:—

> A great many people in India, like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, and others, have been clamouring for some statement of policy. Will these people be really disappointed if this does not go in? Will they be in the least affected by the Government Amendment? I say emphatically that they will not. These people accepted Federation, but they found, when the Bill was introduced, that Federation was unpopular in India, and that, if they were to retain their hold upon Indian opinion, they must find some reason for changing their minds. They changed their minds on the absence of a Preamble from this Bill. What really changed their minds was the attitude of the Indian people. . . .

It may be recalled that both Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar had long since committed themselves to quite definite views on the subject of a formal declaration on the future Constitutional Status of India. They had been prompt to note the silence of the White Paper on the subject, and, on July 26th, 1933, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, supported by Mr. Jayakar, addressed a Memorandum to the Joint Select Committee, at the very beginning of which he said:

> I have come to the conclusion that no constitution which fails to satisfy certain essentials will meet the needs of the situation in India

or rally round it a sufficient body of men willing to work it in the spirit in which it should be worked. In my opinion, those essentials are :—

(5) The constitutional position of India within the British Commonwealth of Nations to be definitely declared in the Statute.

In the concluding paragraph of his Memorandum, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru re-states his position as follows :

It seems to me to be vitally necessary that the constitution itself should provide for India's equality of status with the other Dominions, as soon as she is able to set up under an Act of Parliament complete responsible government.

With these views Mr. Jayakar concurred. He did more. He associated himself with his other colleagues of the British Indian Delegation to the Joint Select Committee in a Memorandum dated November 17th, 1933, to the Committee, at the outset of which the signatories state :

We consider that the Preamble to the Constitution Act should contain a definite statement that the "natural issue of India's constitutional progress is the attainment of Dominion Status."

When both Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar noted, upon the publication of the Joint Select Committee's Report and of the India Bill, that no such formal statement as they had deemed to be essential to satisfy Indian opinion on this aspect of the problem was apparently contemplated, they naturally criticised its absence.

To attribute this to a change of opinion on their part on the question of Federation, or to a desire "to retain their hold upon Indian opinion" by finding an excuse for "changing their minds" on the question of Federation, is not in accordance with facts, for they remain firm supporters of Federation.

Colonel Wedgwood is entitled to his own views on Federation, but he is not entitled to allege that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar have changed theirs, or to attribute unworthy motives to these two distinguished Indian public men, who are not present in Parliament or in this country to contradict him or to defend themselves. HY. S. L. POLAK

265, Strand, W.C.2.

TEACHERS AND POLITICS

SIR,—The authors of the Oxford Manifesto deserve thanks and congratulations for calling attention to a practice which threatens to undermine the traditional English "free" democracy of ordinary citizens and to replace it by a "caucus" democracy of professional politicians.

We English are a politically minded race and one of our finest traditions is the urge to serve our fellow citizens either as members of some voluntary charitable organisation, or as democratically elected representatives in local or national government.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the solution of a great many of our social problems lies in a combination of the individual initiation and good will represented in our tradition of voluntary social service with the administration ability and financial resources of the State. In other words, we need to humanise local and national government and harmonise the official and the voluntary mind, eliminating unnecessary "red tape" on the one side and misdirected—and therefore ineffective—enthusiasm on the other.

In these circumstances the last thing we want is a Parliament and local authorities consisting almost exclusively of representatives of sectional capitalist interests confronting rows of Trade Union officials with a sprinkling of lawyers thrown in on either side to do the special pleading. But anyone who knows the inner workings of our democracy realises that we are drifting perilously near this situation.

Since I was dismissed from Clifton College twelve months ago for standing as a candidate at the municipal elections in Bristol, I have come across case after case of admirably qualified men and women willing and able to stand for election on parish, district, county and borough councils, or for Parliament, who have been deterred from doing so by the prejudice or lack of public spirit of their employers.

We are a great deal too apt to take democracy for granted in this country. Democratic government depends, as does everything else in human society, on the quality of the individuals who compose it. Democracy has failed over three-quarters of the map of Europe, and there is nothing inviolable about English democracy. If we continue to debar from participation in the democratic government of the country vast numbers of those best qualified to serve, we may well find that our representative assemblies are drawn from so narrow a circle that they lack the ability, width of view, or even honesty of purpose to carry out the changes for which they were elected. The nation might then tire of a democratic system which had failed it and turn in despair to dictatorship for the achievement of its purpose. R. ST. JOHN READE

16 Royal Park, Clifton, Bristol.

INTERNATIONAL MARK TWAIN SOCIETY

SIR,—On the occasion of Mark Twain's Centenary the Society is offering a prize of five pounds for the best short essay of approximately 800 words on the subject.

"Mark Twain : 1835–1935."

The type of essay is left to the competitor, but all essays must arrive by July 1. The chairman of the judges will be Dr. Stephen Leacock, of Montreal. CYRIL CLEMENS

Webster Groves, Missouri.

AN ANTHOLOGY OF JOKES

SIR,—I am collecting for an anthology of jokes and anecdotes, both political and social, from all over the world. I should be very grateful to you if you would let me ask your readers if they know any of the more modern ones, especially from abroad. Samples like those told by "Critic" a few months ago would be particularly welcome ; but any verse or historiette bearing on present conditions will also be acceptable. Wherever possible the origin should be given. J. M. LINDSAY

Sörház-u 4-11-5,

Budapest iv, Hungary.

Miscellany

THE MINISTRY OF EMOTION

EVEN from train windows, it is easy to see real signs of the new, accelerated, martial Italy. Even in the train itself, with its time-table, and the freedom of its staff from such major tricks as the stealing of luggage, or such minor tricks, common three years ago, as selling you pillows at one station, and waking you up at the next to remove them forcibly as "soiled" in the hope that you will buy new ones. Inside and outside the railways are efficient and clean : the foreign coal-dust has all been licked up by the new electric engines. Beyond, the fields really are cultivated to the margins. Only near Rome does waste grass appear, and one is told of this, that part is the area recently reclaimed from a three-thousand-year-old dynasty of swampy malarial mosquitoes, and part has been ceded to the State because its owners had failed to improve it. On the Appian way, in Rome itself, no rubbish is allowed to collect in the corners of ancient monuments. And there are certainly soldiers, and an atmosphere of uniforms. The guard of this train has a holster at his hip. Not only officers seem able to wear cloaks with the experienced grace of Shakespearean actors, nor can these be all of them mountain troops who add 5 per cent. to their height by the tremendous nailiness of their boot-soles. Ranks and uniforms are so numerous that porters, postmen and black-shirts merge into one overwhelming soldierish majority.

"Soldierish" rather than "militarist," if there is such a distinction. For once in Italy, walking about in Rome, it is easy to observe, from these very soldiers, that there is little alteration in the Italians themselves. That there is something here which must be absolutely distinguished from the boring, inhuman, German militarism. Watch them marching. No detachment, however small, marches without a band. Often it is a band and nothing else. And there is no correct playing, elbows stiff, of toneless march music, but a gay comic opera tune, with bugles waving from left to right to balance the marcher, heads bowing in exaggerated time to the music, exactly like children playing. It is true that foreign correspondents sometimes give a different picture. I observed on blank walls the sign "W DUCE," which they have told us about, and knew that it meant "Long Live the Duce." Or "W Fascismo," I saw. And I moralised on the fact that in this country a "W RAMSAY" would not live five minutes without some rude addition, whereas in Italy the signs receive no such defacement. But my respectful interest was suddenly

turned to righteous indignation when I saw next to a "W Duce" a "W GUERRA"—and then a few yards farther on the same, next to other sinister words which I could not translate.

It was only by chance that I found out that "GUERRA" did not stand for WAR, but was the name of a champion bicyclist. The Italians are still too gay, and their climate is still too sunny, for them to be fanatical very long, or very exclusively. All the more wonder, that on this unteachable race, least susceptible to logic, whose national characteristic for fifteen hundred years has been an inability to be loyal to anything larger than a town, a race incapable of acting to rule (whether *Thou shalt not kill*, or *Thou shalt use hand signals when driving a car*), should have been imposed a new Italy logical, obedient, and unified.

The world's answer to this problem—"Mussolini"—needs some elaboration. Mussolini himself, it seems, is the most scientific of men. Critics are misled by his face, an intensification of a well-known Italian type which happens to follow rhetorical, "strong man," lines. But he is not at all above being amused at himself, and at the fantastic extent of his power. Ministers, ambassadors, etc., are given to understand that Mussolini prefers a good joke to salaams at the end of an interview. His personal life is much more domestic than imperial. He seems to have no thoughts of money, taking a small, unspecified, and variable allowance from the State when he wants it. His working time (as prime minister, foreign minister, war minister, etc.) is beautifully organised down to five hours a day—the Italians sometimes rather unkindly contrast Ramsay MacDonald, semi-Prime Minister only, yet propped up by Lord Horders, King's Throat Specialists, and similar stimulants.

But one of Mussolini's specialities, indeed his most notable gift, is certainly a talent for rhetoric. As an orator, he must not be judged by English standards. Our English speakers of repute are emotional enough, but the emotion played for in this country follows the line *sound old, solid old, England after all . . . no frills . . . man to man.* In Italy, the emotional sequence follows more classical lines. It is a rhetoric of *onward . . . idealism . . . forward ye peoples.* Of this kind of speech, Mussolini is an academic master. However rational he may be as an explainer of policy in speeches when rhetoric is not pertinent, it is by his emotive oratory that he is known. He himself has seen to that. For Mussolini has added another to his many portfolios. He is minister of emotion. The ramifications of this office are wide, and extend far beyond speech making. In Rome, its works are ever present. Towering above all is the Emotion headquarters, the Victor Emmanuele monument, which last week seemed to be in better form than ever, floodlit, and lined with hundreds of flickering lamps for an anniversary. In the Rome beneath, the subordinates of the department are at work. The news placard announces an Italian football victory over Austria as NEW TRIUMPH FOR FASCIST SPORT. In the movie of *Cleopatra* (Cecil B. de Mille), which I had seen in London, it was noticeable that Caesar's rapid, dictatorish walk was popular with an amused Roman audience. Would there be any special reaction to the assassination *et tu Brute* scene? It was cut out. The department will not allow the possibility of such an act to be even suggested.

But most obvious in Rome last week were the book-shops. Photographs of the Duce were obscured by maps, filling half the window. Each map showed North-East Africa, and on each the Italian possessions were painted green, looking strangely large against the uncoloured remainder. Even from the other side of the street one could see, in the Ethiopean corner, green Italian land bearing down on the pale, colourless Abyssinia, so that the hand fidgeted to paint out what looked an irritating intrusion, a sterile island holding apart two waves of fertile civilisation.

In this kind of organisation, surely, is to be found one explanation of Mussolini's power. It certainly seems to be the explanation of his mysterious aggressiveness in Abyssinia. Mussolini, so careful to keep his relations with big powers cordial; Mussolini, whose kind of dictatorship has begun lately to seem so admirable a contrast to Hitler's, appears to be about to perform an act of blatantly Nazi bellicosity. Common-sense reasons for such a war, whatever penetrations of Africa Germany or Japan may be contemplating, seem such as must appear to the Duce, even if his Achilles heel is a Roman mania for expansion, negligible. But for a director of public feeling, such a war would have much to recommend it. United Italy has never, till now, been united. Difficult as we find it to imagine a time when its big-gum-boot shape was not part of the map, it is one of Europe's most recent additions. Nor, so far, has Italy ever won a war, however many times the Italian children are made to recite "Italy won the war at the battle of Vittorio Veneto." More pertinently still, even the children know that at Adowa, in Abyssinia, the Italians suffered a disgraceful reverse. Now can Adowa be avenged—indeed the department have been preparing for this line of thought by maintaining that Adowa was a disaster, but not a defeat: a setback in the gradual "civilisation" of a barbaric race now at last about to be completed. One small victory is all that is required, and in the course of winning it the sending off of troop-trains, the effective use of beautiful Italian engines in the mechanised divisions, and the triumphant return of not too badly wounded war heroes, will bind the bound *fascisti* closer than ever. Mussolini will know how to build his triumphal arches over the measliest little strip of semi-desert acquisition. It is all part of his daily round. For it is by giving the governing to the governors, and emotions to the people, that he has succeeded in setting up the world's least democratic, most scientific rule (bar Russia) in the country least likely to submit to it.

STEPHEN POTTER

THE MUSE MENDICANT

THE National Theatre is once more appealing. It has an office, a Director of Appeal, and an Organiser. As Lord Lytton, the chairman of the Appeal Committee, recently explained at a meeting in the House of Lords, they mean business this time. There is a Guild of N.T. supporters whose task is to spread the doctrine and collect the funds. You can buy National Theatre stamps and National Theatre postcards. And you may, which is important, reassure the non-Londoner who does not see why he should endow the capital, with the news that the National Theatre will be, in some sort, a movable property. It is determined that a National Theatre company will be a touring, as well as a resident, organisation. If the provincial playgoer sends his shillings, he does it not merely for the greater glory of London, but to build up an organisation which will actively nationalise the best of our theatrical activity, or rather what one hopes will be as good as the best.

So far, so sanguine. The money on hand amounts to £150,000. The money for which supplication goes up is another £350,000. The immediate outlook for financial supplicants is difficult. Jubilee Funds, national and local, naturally have first call upon benevolence; in the autumn a drive can be made without those overwhelming rivals in the field. An all-star matinée at Drury Lane will be held and the Duke and Duchess of York have given it their patronage and promise to attend.

The last point, though it may seem inconsiderable to serious democrats, is of great value. For the democracy is not going to settle this business; it will be put through, if at all, by one or a few rich people, and the fact that Royalty is interested may agreeably stimulate the rich. The widespread appeal is a good tactical move; it gives the air of national demand for a National Theatre. But the real business of getting the money means getting the millionaire. Are there 50,000 households in Great Britain containing one or more people who are seriously enthusiastic about the theatre, not about "going to a show" on Saturday night, but about the art of the theatre as a civic possession and possible source of pride and pleasure? If

there are (and it is a big assumption), and if they can be relied upon to average ten shillings per household in subscription, £25,000 would be raised; that is just one-fourteenth of the sum that is said to be necessary. At the meeting addressed by Lord Lytton there was talk "of the democratic shilling," a good slogan, perhaps, but a poor support. The democratic shillings are hard to come by and cost many shillings to collect. No, the realist may bravely preach where money isn't, but he will deeply probe where money is.

In this matter the descent to brass tacks is really a calculation of coronets. Is the Government prepared to sell a title or two for the cause, and, if so, are there any buyers? The sale of public honours for private party funds was a grubby sort of scandal and has decently diminished. But that titles should be sold for definitely public purposes seems to me a blameless proposition. In a modest way the Appeal Committee are already selling titles. "Donors of £100 and over will be termed Founders of the Theatre, and their names incorporated in the building. Donors of £1,000 and over will be dominated Life Governors, and on giving notice will receive two Governors' seats at the first night of each new production by the National Theatre Company in the National Theatre." That is an open offer; the dividend may strike the prudent investor as insufficient, but there it is. Meanwhile, the really big money will surely insist on something which only Downing Street can provide.

I am ignorant about plutocracy's present attitude to peerages. Have baronies slumped in estimation since the very proper admission of Labour Peers to splash a little pink and introduce some fresh intelligence around the Woolsack? If so, earldoms might do it. There remain dukedoms. It was once monarchy's habit to bestow a dukedom on the love-child; may not democracy bestow the same honour on its benefactors? A prim equalitarian may insist that democracy, distributing titles, makes war on its own first principles; but the English prefer results to doctrine: they drive at practice. Titles are like fine jewels, nonsensical to some, most precious to others: they depend, like diamonds, on scarcity value artificially maintained. We must not spoil the market by releasing too many at a time. But if there are buyers about it seems to me sheer waste of opportunity should democracy refuse to oblige them. Nothing costs so little to create; it is money for jam—possibly from jam. I should have thought—leaving the theatre aside—that the possession of a good National Park was well worth a covey of coronets, that is if democracy still supports the laws of property and is too scrupulous to seize what it wants. The National Theatre, I suggest, is worth another title or two. After all, it would be well in the tradition. For our professional theatre arose, and with some glory, under shelter of nobility. The National Theatre is to be a Shakespeare Memorial. The dedication of the first folio to the "Most Noble and Incomparable Pair and Singular Good Lords," Pembroke and Montgomery, is a reminder for our time. If our existing stock of seigneurial singularity will not respond, may we not attract the good commoner to this deed of patronage by whispering "Good Lord"?

IVOR BROWN

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Charlot's Char-a-Bang"

Revue production is a kind of marksmanship, in which grouping and aggregate scoring are more important than an occasional brilliant bull. With this premiss, *Charlot's Char-a-Bang* at the Vaudeville is a disappointment. It is a hotch-potch of "turns," lacking that unity of atmosphere which a revue needs. Some of the turns are admirable, some quite appallingly dull; and one has the sensation at the end of the evening of having taken an intolerable deal of bread with one's halfpennyworth of sack. Incidentally the Robey Falstaff provokes the most amusing notion in the show—that of a production of *Hamlet* in which the parts are played by stars from an alien firmament. Thus Mr. Reginald Gardiner shrugs and sways and trips his way through Mr. Jack Buchanan's interpretation of the Prince, Mr. Reginald Smith is pink and plump as the Gertrude of Mr. Douglas Byng, and Mr. Jack Clewes equips the King with the cheerful grin of Mr. Jack Hulbert. The farce would be more uproarious if the lines were better—Gertrude's song, for instance, is a maddening injustice to Mr. Byng's wicked art—but the idea is excellent, and the player-parodists astonishingly clever. John Tilley and Reginald Gardiner work hard and long in the rest of the show, and, as might be expected, are most interesting when handling their own materials. Both are comedians of high capability, and both are frequently funny. But the songs, on the whole, are uninspired, and the dancing and *décor* below standard: so that when both are off the stage at once there is little more than the hope of their return to keep the audience happy.

". . . And a Woman Passed By"

With an improbability to sell, the deft dramatists can always blame it on the weather. Rain, a frolic wind or thunder on the left may all be calculated to produce some indirect entertainment when a playwright knows his business. There is a storm in Mr. Vernon Sylvaine's new play at the Duke of York's, with waves thundering on the nearby shingle, but it can hardly account for the aberration of Joan Gilson. She, being troubled about the continuance of her husband's devotion, walks out and commits suicide with so little reason that Richard, one feels, deserves his freedom; and that is no proper sentiment to be engendered at the climax of what purports to be a sympathetic study of a woman who loves not wisely but too well. Miss Kathleen O'Regan has an appealing, childlike quality in her portrayal of the part which makes us forgive her nonsense many times, but jealousy and humility can be very depressing in combination, and one searches in vain for traces of the gallant woman who once agreed to peel potatoes for her unsuccessful author-husband in the lonely bungalow while he should write a desperate masterpiece. And what are we to say of Richard who, winning success later, buys the bungalow and brings his mistress down to share with him a sentimental reverie behind the cracked shutters? Mr. Ion Swinley, with his ascetic sincerity of attack, can do nothing with him except emphasise willy-nilly the hollowness of the author's invention.

"Skylark" at the Curzon

This is not a specimen of the French film at its best—but it is a typical French film: which means that, even though *Skylark* is episodic and casual, it is effortless and tidy; its farce has the force of good sense, its comedy spins like a top—and, if sentiment were involved, that too would have the same gifted, winning touch. French films are almost invariably balanced, adequate and human, because, while they lack pretension, they possess charm and each of the distinct types of wit implied by Pope; they attain, in fact, their own minor and very satisfying perfection. French cinema-enthusiasts, and many Americans, may find them boring, but, imported, they are a delightful luxury. *Skylark* is slightly deficient in two of the virtues which ensure this particular excellence: the photography is sound, but seldom brilliant; and sheer startling prettiness of photography, for its own sake, the French still cling to long after the Americans have dropped it (if they ever had it); secondly, the plot and sub-plot here (marriage and aviation, or vice versa) are dumped down together, which has somewhat blurred the general outline. But in comedy this is no doubt largely permissible; similarly, in *Skylark*, the photography is intended merely as an efficient medium for one comic idea, and one idea of comedy, exploited to the full. M. Noel-Noel works away at it, and M. Fernandel helps him (the pathetic simpleton and the engaging grotesque): the result is an uproariously funny film—in London's most comfortable cinema.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, April 19th—
"Messiah," Albert Hall, 2.30.
"St. John Passion," Queen's Hall, 7.30.

SATURDAY, April 20th—
Conference on New Ideals in Education. Speeches by the Governor of Borstal, Prof. Marcault, Sir E. Simon, Prof. Zimmern and Others, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Till April 25th.

MONDAY, April 22nd—
"Let's Go Gay," Shaftesbury Theatre.

TUESDAY, April 23rd.—
Goethe's Faust, Part II, Festival Theatre, Cambridge.
Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations, Stratford-upon-Avon.

THURSDAY, April 25th—
"A Nous la Liberté," Everyman Cinema Theatre.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

History and biography have been too frequently employed in the service of error and vice; but by proper management they may be made equally effectual in the cause of learning, virtue and religion.

THESE delightful words with their reference, I suppose, to the misdeeds of Gibbon and Voltaire, are taken from the introduction to a charming little work, *The Juvenile Plutarch*, published early in the nineteenth century, and they represent an attitude which, after suffering a memorable eclipse, seems likely to shine out once more with renewed refulgence. They were written when men were living in an age of faith, and we, to our bewilderment, have been plunged back into another. So extraordinary are the beliefs held all round us that they almost inhibit our faculty of wonder. But divergent and bizarre as are our modern creeds, they have one thing in common with the faith of our great-grandparents. Their adherents all know error and vice from learning and virtue, and their minds are ceaselessly preoccupied in pointing out which is which. In Tchehov's play, *Ivanov*, there is a typical believer—a Doctor Lvov—born before his time, for the Lvovs rule Europe now—and it is pleasant to remember that he gets rather roughly handled by the neurotic Ivanov and his sickly Jewish wife. And how one wants to echo their words to our modern Lvovs!

Anna Petrovna: Listen, Mr. Honest Man! It is not polite to take a lady out and to talk to her of nothing but your honesty all the way. It may be honest but, to say the least, it is wearisome. . . .

Ivanov: No, Doctor, there are too many wheels and screws and levers in any one of us for us to be able to judge each other from two or three external signs. . . .

Lvov: Can you imagine . . . that I am so brainless that I can't see the difference between a rogue and an honest man?

Ivanov: I've heard about that already.

* * *

British Scientists of the Nineteenth Century, by J. G. Crowther (Kegan Paul, 12*s.* 6*d.*), is a very interesting book—a series of original studies of the great physicists: Davy, Faraday, Joule, Kelvin and Clerk-Maxwell. Unfortunately, the author is a little bit of a Lvov. Karl Marx appears on the first page and the author is given to making statements for which no evidence is produced:

The contemplation of excessively large, or profound objects, such as mountains, cities, or Shakespeare, often inhibits the young mind. Cornwall offers a natural kindergarten landscape. In this environment Davy roamed without restraint.

Let us hope for the sake of the Safety Lamp that he did not read *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The Battle of the Nile was a sign of the rise of the British industrial development of the nineteenth century.

Battle of the Nile fought August 1st, 1798.

Balzac was impelled to destroy the aristocracy he admired through the instrument of realistic literature, and Davy was impelled to destroy the aristocracy through the development of science capable of profitable exploitation by another social class.

Question: Who was impelled to destroy the aristocracy? Answer: Balzac, through the instrument of realistic literature.

Perhaps Ramsay MacDonald's ideas of a National Government of leaders of all parties was adopted from Thomson (Lord Kelvin) partly through a desire to align himself with the family tradition and complete the assimilation into the upper classes. . . .

He may have remembered the formation of a National Government by Mr. Lloyd George during the war even more clearly than the words of his wife's great-uncle.

His retiring disposition and the cultural barbarity of his environment are among the factors that have prevented Joule and his researches from having an expected fascination. . . . The comprehensive human imagination could not be nourished by Joule's discoveries because they sprang from poisoned social sources. . . .

Cultural barbarity was not the vice of the well-to-do citizens of Manchester during its hey-day between 1818 and 1889. It was a centre of culture and particularly of music. Mr. Crowther tells us that Joule's elder brother was an enthusiastic musician and that Joule himself collected pictures.

The young man could afford to buy pictures at a price equal to the year's income of a skilled workman.

That might be a very wicked state of affairs or it might not, but it is not evidence of cultural barbarity. The use of certain words shows that Mr. Crowther, like the author of *The Juvenile Plutarch*, is absorbed by blaming vice and praising virtue. Thus one man is "often nobler" than another, a second's limitations are "of a less pardonable sort," though he is "commendably uninterested," while the father of a third "deserves much credit." I have dwelt at some length in a hostile spirit on the bad points of a good book because they illustrate that the return of faith involves the return of smug self-satisfaction. And while interesting and amusing at the distance of a century this lack of humility about moral questions is extraordinarily boring and tiresome in a contemporary. One of the people who might have been censured rather severely was Sir Humphry Davy, who calmly used nitrous oxide to relieve his own toothache in 1799 and left it to an American dentist to rediscover its use as an anaesthetic in 1844. But this deficiency of the imagination is not regarded as blameworthy, perhaps because no social or economic injustice is involved but only human suffering.

* * *

But Mr. Crowther's method of approach has some very good points indeed. It is not merely that he understands and is able to explain clearly what were the greatest discoveries of each of his subjects, and that they are in themselves fascinating men—but that his Marxian ideas do bring out fresh and interesting angles in his subjects. In a modest introduction he tells us that his inspiration was a paper on *The Social and Economic Roots of Newton's "Principia,"* communicated by Professor Hessen at the International Congress of Science in 1931, and he provides us with social and economic roots for English nineteenth-century physics which are well worth considering—unlike those suggested for the formation of the National Government. The following passage shows his method at its best:

The social origin of Davy and Faraday had remarkable directly scientific effects. In the whole of their glorious works there is not a single algebraical or chemical formula. They were entirely outside the mathematical tradition of the Universities of the English governing class.

For though Davy kept terms at Cambridge he did not go there until his mind was thoroughly developed. Cornwall did more, as Mr. Crowther points out, than provide kindergarten scenery. It was the centre of a huge mining industry in which steam was being installed, and James Watt's son came to live with the Davys as a lodger. And very early in his career Davy went to work for Dr. Beddoes, the father of the poet, who financed his first investigations. Faraday was, of course, Davy's laboratory assistant. Mr. Crowther asks the question:

Why were Faraday and Darwin so intellectually superior to the English nineteenth century writers, and why were Tolstoy and Dostoevsky so superior to the Russian nineteenth century scientists?

And his answer is:

The soul of British industrialism was expressed in its struggle to subject natural forces to commercial ends. . . . The society of nineteenth century Russia, unlike that of England, had not been launched by a dominant class towards the accomplishment of a specific object. It was in a condition of unmanageable conflict. Men of powerful intellect could find no obvious channel for the use of their energy, so they turned on themselves and wrote a literature that was as great as the conflicts that disorganised their minds. Davy and Faraday expressed the intellectual aspect of a movement that has produced the civilisation based on applied science, whereas Tolstoy and Dostoevsky expressed the intellectual aspect of a situation that has produced a communist organisation of society.

One may murmur that Mendeleev was far from despicable as a scientist, but the passage is one that needs careful thinking over since it seems to be profoundly true. There is a great deal more that is very stimulating in the book, and the study of Clerk-Maxwell is in many ways charming.

DAVID GARNETT

PHYSICAL GENIUS

Sailing, Seamanship, and Yacht-construction. By UFFA FOX. *Davies.* 35s.

Discussions of intellectual genius are common, and mostly boring. But one seldom sees physical genius discussed. Yet it plainly exists: the power to achieve the incredible with one's body: muscular inspiration. Intellectual genius springs when an immense desire and an intricate skill, instead of remaining two things, fuse. But, after all, the body also has its desires and its skills; and they too have their flash-point. For example, take the overwhelming desire to kill. A horseman, galloping down a rocky hillside after a wild boar, his spear itching for the prick, will accomplish feats of horsemanship no cavalier in the ring at Olympia could attain.

Indeed, one might define sport as any pursuit which enables feats of bodily genius to be performed. For this applies equally to the humane sports. These are motivated by a desire almost as immense as blood-lust (of which it is a kind of corollary): the desire to save one's own life. While risk is the necessary—if paradoxical—preliminary to the fulfilment of this desire, it is only those who make a public attitude of Living Dangerously (an attempt, as a rule, to assert an otherwise dubious masculinity) who mistake it for the end in view. It is not a love of danger, it is the immeasurable human longing for safety which is the mainspring of the dangerous sports. To be continually, in the face of apparently insuperable difficulties, saving one's life.

Certainly it is the mainspring of the art of seamanship. In the writings of all the greatest and most hair-raising seamen, you will find them continually stressing the safety of what they do. Take Captain Slocum: the first man to sail round the world single-handed. Or Captain Voss, who bought a fifty-year-old dug-out canoe from an Indian in Vancouver Island, and sailed round the world in that. He repeatedly assures you that he did it to show how safe, provided you make skilful use of a sea-anchor, any small boat can be in any seas. Both these men (and both, mark you, were drowned in the end) possessed physical genius of a quite extraordinary order. The bodily ability of Captain Voss differed quite as widely from that of the average yachtsman as the intellect of Einstein differs from that of an adding-clerk, or Shakespeare's from a penny-a-liner's. I seriously maintain that the gap is as wide as that.

The bodily genius of Mr. Fox is of rather a different kind to that of Slocum and Voss. True, he has been more than once a valuable member of the crew of an ocean racer. But it is rather in the design and handling of very small, very light open boats that his performance is really outstanding. For in the art of sailing Mr. Fox is notable as a composer as well as an executant. It was with a canoe of his own design and construction that Mr. Fox went to America, and won the International Canoe Trophy—the first time a foreigner had won it in its history of forty-eight years. It was with this same canoe that he later attained the almost incredible speed of 16.3 knots—a speed only possible by sailing the boat clean out of the water, so that it skims the surface like a hydroplane. He developed the miraculous little twelve-footers one now sees planing along at Port Meadow. He revolutionised the hull-design of the International fourteen-footer class—those smart little open mahogany cockle-shells one sees racing on the Broads, or wherever there is a good expanse of smooth, protected water: and then, having won twenty races in succession at Cowes, took on board a crew of three (two to man the bailer), and sailed her across to Havre. This would have been astonishing enough in the smoothest summer weather: but the day he did it a fifty-ton cutter was running home for shelter! At Havre he ballasted her with further trophies, before beating back to Cowes. That, perhaps, is the most hair-raising thing he has done.

Now he has written a book. For the yachtsman, especially the cruising man, it is the most interesting one published in recent years. It is full of information, full of new ideas, and admirably illustrated. It is expensive; but if you are a sailor and can't afford it otherwise—well, pawn your anchor, for it is a pearl of great price. On the other hand, though it is not so purely technical, and certainly not so dry, as its title would suggest, it is possibly too technical in general to interest the pure landsman. But there is one proposition which Mr. Fox throws out by the way that is certainly of more than technical interest.

The immense improvement in the design of modern sailing-machines, he points out, has come since the building of large sailing-vessels for commercial purposes was abandoned. Now the inherent speed of a ship increases in proportion to the length of its water-line. It is only because they are so much smaller than the old clipper-ships that modern racing-boats do not vastly excel them in speed. But suppose that a sailing ship were built to-day, of the size which modern methods of construction render possible, and in accordance with modern design! Mr. Fox suggests that such a ship would rival the fastest liners on those ocean passages where the average wind is a fairly predictable constant. The difficulty of such a scheme commercially of course lies in the labour-costs of the crew, which would be required to handle her enormous area of sails. This would be liable to eat up far more than one saved in fuel. But even here modern labour-saving devices might help to counteract it. I wish Mr. Fox would go into the matter in some detail, and show us at least a sketch of his proposed winged leviathan. For if anyone is capable of working it out, that person is Mr. Fox.

RICHARD HUGHES

NEW NOVELS

La Fin de la Nuit. Par FRANÇOIS MAURIAC. *Grasset.* 15*fr.*
Madam, I'll Give You. By KATHLEEN WALLACE. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Pendulum Swing. By MARY MITCHELL. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
That We Might Live. By ALAN THOMAS. *Harrap.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Eden Sequence. By ADAM BENT. *Simpkin Marshall.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

M. François Mauriac has recently gone over to the Catholic Church; he has also been elected to the Academie Française; and this accession of respectability has not failed to exercise a determining—incidentally, a somewhat depressing—influence upon the development of his remarkable narrative gifts. *Ce Qui Etait Perdu* and *Le Noeud de Vipères* seemed poor novels when we remembered that they came from the novelist who had already produced *Genitrix*, *Thérèse Desqueyroux* and *Le Désert de l'Amour*. *Ce Qui Etait Perdu* was particularly disappointing. *La Fin de la Nuit* belongs both in spirit and in treatment to a slightly earlier period and (as M. Mauriac explains in his foreword) partakes of an anguish and anxiety that, since his conversion, he has shaken off. But is it good for an artist to be converted? Is it not the writer's privilege to express, through his own anxiety, the anxieties of the world at large, always without allowing his fears and fantasies to harden into a definite moral bias? Should not his point of view remain unfixed? Through M. Mauriac's earlier books ran a strain of restlessness and nostalgia, very cleverly married to the background of the story. The moral isolation of the characters was reflected in the mournful and monotonous landscape amid which they passed their days. Around Thérèse Desqueyroux, shut up with the husband and mother-in-law whom she detests, stretches the loneliness of the sandy pine-grown country near Bordeaux, pervaded by the scent of resin and the smell of burning pinewood, haunted by the stridulation of summer cicadae—a country where the grasshopper becomes a burden and human passions turn in upon themselves.

La Fin de la Nuit is a continuation of *Thérèse Desqueyroux*; but it is not (M. Mauriac announces) a sequel in the stricter sense of the word. Many years have gone by since Thérèse was acquitted of the charge of attempting to poison her husband; she has moved to Paris; and there, in a small apartment overlooking the tumult of the Rue du Bac, lives a solitary and disenchanted life. She is weary of the world and of herself. . . . A new interest is provided by the appearance of her daughter and of the young man, a foolish and pretentious student, to whom her daughter is engaged. But no one who encounters Thérèse can resist the maleficent spell she is supposed to exert. The young man falls in love with the strange middle-aged woman whose experience fascinates him, whereas the innocence and inexperience of the daughter leave him completely unstirred. This situation is handled by M. Mauriac with great skill; and the story reaches its climax when Thérèse, alone with Marie's lover, draws back her hair and exposes her ravaged forehead, "afin que le garçon qu'elle charme, la prenne en horreur et s'éloigne d'elle. . . ."

He flees from her; but not until the poison of her experience has entered his system. She has inoculated him with her own moral *malaise*, has introduced him to himself—to the recollection of offences just as base (she asserts) as the crime of which she had been accused and, fortunately but unfairly, had been acquitted. "Je vous empoisonne"—this cry, wrung from Thérèse by the dilemma in which she finds herself, sums up her whole tragedy: "O douleur d'être clairvoyante! Infirmité de ne pouvoir se

duper soi-même! Evidence, certitude qu'elle n'accomplissait rien d'autre, tous ces jours-ci, que d'empoisonner le bonheur de Marie! Et cette fois, quelle excuse invoquer? Que lui avait fait cette enfant, sinon d'avoir cherché auprès d'elle un refuge? . . ."

But, if the dilemma is convincing, M. Mauriac's solution of Thérèse's moral problem is considerably less impressive. Surrounded, as she imagines, by enemies who are plotting her destruction, Thérèse loses her wits and, ill and neurasthenic, is transported by her forgiving daughter back to Argelouse, the scene of her unsuccessful crime. In the shelter of her husband's house she prepares for death. There are readers (observes M. Mauriac) who demand—and demand "with reason"—that every literary work should mark "les étapes d'une ascension spirituelle"; and although, for the benefit of such readers, M. Mauriac originally intended that Thérèse on her death-bed should receive the consolation of the Church, "ces pages consolantes ont été écrites, puis dechirées: je ne VOYAIS pas le prêtre qui devait recevoir la confession de Thérèse"—a failure that alone saves his novel from the banality into which it might otherwise have descended.

La Fin de la Nuit is a short book. But then, the great advantage possessed by a French novel of this kind over its English equivalent is concentration. English publishers do not encourage short novels; and yet there are few themes that, as treated by the average modern novelist, seem to contain the material of more than, say, fifty thousand words. Far too many English novelists appear to leave their subject matter "in soak" till it has become swollen and bloated much beyond its natural size. Certainly, of the British novels under review, there is scarcely one that would not be improved were the volume cut down to half its present dimensions. Thus, *Madam, I'll Give You*, though a readable and not uninteresting narrative, contains a study of three contrasted feminine personalities written up by Miss Kathleen Wallace at quite unnecessary length. The first section, devoted to Jenny Stroud, a brisk and optimistic young woman who starts a successful dress shop and marries a romantic explorer, is crowded with interior decoration of the most exasperating and irrelevant kind. Section Three, *All Souls' Day for Karen*—the portrait of a warm-blooded young woman who has married a cold and ascetic scholar—is definitely more forceful and to the point; while the third portrait remains a little vapourish. Miss Wallace might be better equipped for writing novels if she would submit to the admirable discipline of the short story.

Pendulum Swing is also extremely feminine. There are those of us who recollect—and who shudder as we recollect—*A Warning to Wantons*, the deliberately "naughty" and remarkably saleable first novel with which Miss Mitchell made her bow to the British public. In the meantime, her mood has grown less exuberant. *Pendulum Swing* is the history of an unusually plain girl; Christina hates her pretty cousin, and yearns for the triumphs, social and amatory, that never come her way. If she goes to a dance, she may be quite sure that only with her hostess's intervention will she succeed in capturing even the dullest and gawkiest of partners. As likely as not she will be marooned during the course of the festivities, to finish the evening in cloak room, lonely linen cupboard, or some other conveniently secluded retreat, where she can hide her head till the moment arrives when she may go home. She marries; but her husband is a bore and a cad. . . . I embarked on *Pendulum Swing* without much hope; but it is a curious fact that a reader delights in a character's sufferings; that the miseries of a comedian afford the audience a perverse joy. You want to experience all the agonies of being a wall-flower? Miss Mitchell will not spare you a blush or a squirm.

It seems unfortunate, however, that the heroine should struggle through to a sense of intellectual superiority on the last page. I cannot believe that, after a lifetime of corroding humiliation, Christina would suddenly realise that she was different from—and superior to—the prosperous, charming, fashionable cousin whom she had loathed, envied and respected for more than twenty years, and leave her party—in shabby overcoat and squelching goloshes—thanking God, "simply and sincerely," for the lot that He had given her. We have all tasted that exquisite sanctification of our own incompetence; but we have most of us woken up to the unpleasant truth that, although worthy men may be unsuccessful, unsuccessful men, alas, are not always worthy. . . . This truth Mr. Thomas would perhaps dispute. *That We Might Live* is the story of a wistful and worthy under-dog, a gross and snobbish dramatist, and his blackmailing brother-in-law who lives by his wits. In the Prologue a group of young soldiers are asking one another what they will be doing in 1931; and Mr. Thomas tells the sorry tale of the survivors. The nicest character is reduced to distributing leaflets; but my real sympathy was reserved for the indomitable cad.

Eden Sequence whisks us off to an earthly paradise. Hundreds of years ago the Portuguese, descending on the east coast of Africa, mixed their blood with the blood of the black peoples and left behind them, besides the Baroque churches that they built, a race that was neither black nor white but a warm and voluptuous coffee-colour. *Eden Sequence* deals with the passions and intrigues of a half-caste population. It is readable; the book is interesting and well-documented; but the author's adjectives are laid on a little too thick. The atmosphere of eroticism should have been implied, not insistently stated. Repetition is inclined to dull the palate. One thinks of the throbbing tom-toms of a Hollywood film.

PETER QUENNELL

BABEL

Language. By LEONARD BLOOMFIELD. *Allen and Unwin.* 15*s*.

This is a revised version of the author's *Introduction to the Study of Language* (New York, 1914). The earlier work was based on the psychologic system of Wundt, which is rather forsaken for the mechanistic method in this new volume, intended for "the intelligent layman and the student who is entering upon linguistic work." One would remark, to begin with, that the author's estimate of the intelligence of the layman is slightly optimistic. The layman who is quite at home among phonemes, tagmemes, taxemes, relation-axis constructions, the phrasal sandhi-type and zero-anaphora must surely be rather a rare bird. Even the student who is entering upon linguistic study would perhaps be wise to tackle something rather more popular and simple, such as Jespersen or Hovelacque, before embarking on Professor Bloomfield's 500 pages of close-packed erudition. The said erudition is sometimes overwhelming, e.g., Chapter 4, the Languages of the World, contains a vast amount of interesting matter, but the reader who wants to get a general idea of the American Indian languages will be paralysed to find that they fall into five main groups—Algonquian, Athabascan, Iroquoian,

Where is he now?

The Brontosaurus clung to his thin neck and unwieldy body and refused to adapt them to meet changing conditions; he was overcome in the race for existence and is extinct. Shell, unlike this conservative saurian, has for 27 years used every means of making better petrol, and is now, with ever growing reputation and unchanged name, a shining example of the law of the "survival of the fittest," and the "natural selection" of the motoring public.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

SHELL

YOU CAN BE SURE OF SHELL

Muskogean and Siouan, with the possible addition of Uto-Aztecan, and that these groups are further subdivided into about sixty separate tongues, some, such as Mohawk or Choctaw, with a somewhat familiar ring, but mostly of the Potawatomi, Onondaga or Winnebago type! It would be interesting to have for these presumably doomed languages some such figures as are given for the minor Baltic-Finnish group, the smallest of which, Vogule, is spoken by only 5,000 people. Manx, alas, is now only familiar to "a few hundreds."

As language is, in its simplest form, merely articulate sound, it is inevitable that a serious work on the subject should be largely occupied with the discussion of Phonology, a branch of linguistics which many students find particularly fascinating, while others are repelled by it. After four very detailed chapters on this theme, with constant comparisons between the physiology of speech in English and in other languages of the world, we pass on, *via* a rather meagre chapter on Meaning, followed by a full treatment of Sentence-types, Syntax and Morphology, to a chapter rather oddly entitled Substitution, which really deals with the use of the pronouns. This is not very light reading, e.g., "In addition to the Class-meaning, every substitute has another element of meaning, the *substitution-type*, which consists of the conventional circumstances under which the substitution is made. Thus, *I* replaces any singular substantive expression (this domain gives us the class-meaning of *I*), provided that this substantive expression denotes the speaker of the very utterance in which the *I* is produced: this is the substitution-type of *I*."

However, much of the book can certainly be read with pleasure and profit even by the intelligent layman, e.g., Chapter 16, Form-Classes and Lexicon, in which the author once more explodes the ridiculous tradition of the peasant or working-man only using a few hundred words, whereas he really uses more than Shakespeare, and Chapter 17, Written Records, with its interesting account of the most ancient inscriptions, deciphered or undeciphered, distributed about the world, while Chapter 19, Dialect Geography, gives an astonishing idea of the infinite variety of human speech, even within comparatively restricted areas. Most palatable of all are Chapters 24, Semantic Change, and 25, Cultural Borrowing, in which we get right away from the mechanics of language and can follow the play of the human mind. In fact, one would be almost inclined to recommend both the intelligent layman and the fledgling student to read the book backwards.

Altogether, a work of amazing erudition, by a writer who seems equally at home in primitive Chinese, pre-Irish, Samoan, Sumerian and Tagalog. It will long be regarded as an indispensable aid by all serious students of comparative philology.

ERNEST WEEKLEY

AUSTRIA TO-DAY

Modern Austria. By CICELY HAMILTON. *Dent.* 7s. 6d.

Modern Austria takes the reader up to the beginning of this year; and since no event of national importance has occurred during the printing of the book, it may be said to be a truly contemporary account of Austrian life. Events of national importance happen so frequently and categorically day by day in post-war Europe that the first test of any history book which claims to be modern must be to ascertain whether it is in fact contemporary.

Such a state of affairs demands either a graphic description which pictorially covers the superficial aspects of a country, or a more profound interpretation of basic principles which only the specialist can perform—politically, socially, or philosophically. The former interpretation is that which Miss Hamilton undertakes.

Though the book is primarily a study of social conditions in Austria, it has a political orientation. What are Miss Hamilton's politics and what are the politics of the present regime in Austria is, nevertheless, somewhat of a mystery to the reader. Several times the author assures us by implication that she is not a Socialist, and her attitude toward Socialist motives shows a certain anxiety to deny any sympathy with left-wing politics. Toward the Dollfuss regime she avoids any hint of censure, toward the Nazis she is discreet. The result, in spite of an admirable lack of partizanship, is diffused and negative: information which has only one dimension. This is not much relieved by the interpolation of personal detail (how I saw Dollfuss).

It would be doing it an injustice, however, to condemn the whole work on that score.

It is evident that Miss Hamilton's knowledge of Austria is considerable, and her selection of detail is most interesting. The second chapter of the book deals with the question of private armies, tracing the growth of the Heimwehr, the Schutzbund, and the more recent Freiheitsbund. In such a small country as Austria the existence of these private armies or their forerunners since the war has been an example of the ultimate and logical development of class warfare. Austria, with her hopelessly unbalanced geographical distribution and her economical disparities, is a country of extremes, of desperate loyalties. The first round in a class struggle ended with the hanging of Wallisch and the bombardment of working-class districts in Vienna (the damage to which, Miss Hamilton continually assures us, has been grossly over-estimated). The gloves already are off in Austria. Force is the criterion: and meanwhile every other nation in Europe is involved directly or indirectly. It is one of the known danger spots.

A book which brings the history of the country up to date, in modern terms, is to be welcomed. Miss Hamilton's survey has been difficult. She has accomplished it with the wide perception necessary in discussing a problem with such far-reaching complications, and a distinction which leaves not a dull page in the book.

JOHN PUDNEY

FACT AND FABLE

"Story" In America, 1933-1934. Edited by WHIT BURNETT and MARTHA FOLEY. *Barker.* 8s. 6d.

Captain Patch. By T. F. POWYS. *Chatto and Windus.* 7s. 6d.

English writers are more fortunate than American, Henry James once said, in that they have for their matter a life made orderly and manageable with precise yet subtly differentiated codes of manners, so that a word, a gesture or an intonation suffices to define a man. That this description of difference is true one may see from American films; and once, at an Aristotelian Society congress, one of the initiators of Critical Realism, nodding in the direction of a renowned Gifford lecturer, asked me "Who's the whiskery old —— yonder?" which is not the common mode of philosophic inquiry.

Yet "*Story*" *in America* strongly inclines one to doubt Henry James's attribution of superiority. Reading its thirty-four stories one sees that they indeed draw little support from reference to accepted codes of behaviour but that there is about them an uncommon air of reality. One hazards the opinion that they owe their special quality to precisely that lack which Henry James lamented. Each psychological point, each dramatic conflict, has to be carefully built up or boldly grabbed at. The result may be much broken glass but at least the thief lays his hands upon precious stones, which the master cracksman may not do. The very shattering of form which such methods often involve helps to convey a sense of reality. One is reminded of Somerset Maugham's remark concerning English taste in short stories. Our great novels have been shapeless and this, far from disconcerting their readers, has given them a sense of security. This is the life we know, they have thought, with its arbitrariness and inconsequence.

The impression of richness and vigour which his volume makes is partly the result of another form of this disability. *Seventy Thousand Assyrians* by William Saroyan, Stoyan Christowe's *First Love* with its Balkan setting, Z. N. Hurston's negro story, *The Gilded Six-Bits*, Michael Bruen's Jewish *Ceremonial Into Manhood*, Eric Howard's *Indian Business* and others disclose the varied sources, the mingled tradition, the fusion or clash of cultures which American civilisation offers the artist. In yet another sense the observation holds good, for as Rebecca West has pointed out in *The Strange Necessity*, the prevalence of violent crime in the Latin communities of America is due to the uprooting of its members from an ancient soil of tradition. And the crime story, used as a means of psychological revelation, figures prominently in this collection. Readiness to draw upon other techniques, not always with validity, is indicated by the movie-talk and "flash-back" tricks of some of these writers.

Not all of the contributions support this argument. There is a hardness of form and neatness of effect about Martha Dodd's superb *Brother and Sister* which, like its subject matter, is quite universal. Admirable form, too, is possessed by the really good *Nothing Can Stop It* of Elizabeth Wagner. It may indicate personal bias that the book pleases me by containing several stories in which work, the job itself, forms either the main theme, as in the exciting *An Underground Episode* of Edmund Ware, or as the slip-way to the essential point, as in Lyford Moore's *Etched In Steel*,

yet altogether " *Story* " *In America* is an anthology that must prove significant and stimulating for anyone.

Mr. T. F. Powys' contact with reality is much more difficult to localise and assess. At the level of factual truth it is difficult to credit such a story as *The Gong*, yet if one considers, one sees that its theme is nothing but, or quite as much as, the tragedy of self-regimentation. There is in it, therefore, that touch of universality which makes literature of an anecdote, as there is also in the fantastic and delightful trifle which gives title to the book.

The direct, yet highly stylised telling, the sureness of form and a certain rhythm in the prose of these tales remind one somehow of fairy stories, and that exactly matches the arbitrariness and the element of unreality which characterises Mr. Powys' work. The resemblance to folk tales is again apparent in that Mr. Powys does not shrink from a happy ending, and that is something for which one is grateful, as for the prevailing characteristic of the whole book of reflective peace and natural tranquillity.

But Mr. Powys, I feel, makes more than one serious blunder. The intrusion of just one phrase too closely descriptive of emotion in the last passage of *King Duck* is an error which the author repeats in a larger way in *His Best Coat*. John Rudden's fiancée gives him an expensive coat which serves him throughout a contented married life. When at last the coat is sneered at by village boors John Rudden goes into a copse and quietly drowns himself in a pond. It is far too drastic a conclusion, for the point could have been secured quite as effectively without such a straining of the aesthetic scale. And some, I fear, will be provoked to violent rebellion by the utterly out-of-scale ending of *Charlotte Bennett*.

Mr. Powys often achieves a real beauty of phrase, and there is always a certain kind of appeal about his writing, which even survives his occasionally idiosyncratic use of mood and tense, as on page 55.

> Though the copse was in a lonely valley, yet there is never any loneliness where a woodcutter works, for he is ever hewing and cutting the wood, and his blows may be heard a mile away, did anyone listen to them.

But, after all, such things will butt into the best man's writing, as Gertrude Stein butts into the first-mentioned collection.

RALPH BATES

ENGLISH SPLEEN

Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires. Vol. V (1771-1783). By M. D. GEORGE. *British Museum Publication.* 2 *Guineas.*

The catalogue of English satirical prints, which the British Museum authorities have decided to continue after an interval of fifty-two years, is more than its name would seem to imply. The present volume deals with the period in which the caricature, as we understand it, emerged, and which preceded the great age of English caricature which lies between the years 1780 and 1815. It is, in fact, an assemblage of documents of prime importance for an understanding of the English. It is not only that

> By the close of the period covered by this volume, if not earlier, pictorial satire was recognised as peculiarly an English art and an English weapon,

but that the conception of caricature in England differs completely from that on the Continent. It is remarkable to begin with that the popular satirical medium should take the form of pictorial art, an art which has, since the mediaeval period, never been a popular means of expression in England. That it was the people's art would be obvious even if it were not known that a considerable number of the prints produced was the work of amateurs or produced after their designs. Nor did it have the contribution of great artists. Hogarth was interested only in social satire. Gillray, who is so important in the early development, is not even an artist of the second rank. Rowlandson, who was an artist of considerable powers, entirely lacked the venom necessary for true caricature, and few of his works in this genre can be considered as other than essays in the grotesque.

The reason is that there was no breathing-room in such art for a great artist. English caricature is purely anecdotic. It cannot for that reason become universal drama, as it does in Goya and Daumier. It is forced by its nature to remain popular anecdotic literature.

The English caricature takes to their logical conclusion the underlying characteristics of English art—above all, its satirical spirit which goes back to the drolleries so largely developed in English mediaeval manuscripts, and still more that episodic

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character already present in English thirteenth-century art. The English see things circumstantially, and nowhere more so than in their caricatures, which never have the value of a single gesture, but are an accumulation of allusions and over-burdened symbols. The legacy is apparent in those elaborate and detailed captions to the jokes in *Punch*, and even Low has to put more labels than would a Continental caricaturist.

The whole of this side of English art must some day be thoroughly analysed; at present it is only possible to supply the foundations for later art historians. Dr. George, both in the introduction and in the catalogue proper, has restricted herself to factual matters, and the book is therefore an admirable objective presentment of the material. NEIL MACLAREN, JR.

PEACE WITHOUT HONOUR

Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question. By R. W. SETON-WATSON. *Macmillan.* 21s.

In the speculations of a generation like our own, which can more readily tolerate flippancy than prosiness, the Disraeli quotation has been steadily rising; Professor Seton-Watson's book, however, will cause a very heavy slump in Disraeli stocks. The flippancy, or in other words, the ignorant opportunism, which all but precipitated an Anglo-Russian war in the 'seventies, is not, after all, the kind which we are accustomed to appreciate. "Your Highness will find it very difficult to carry on a really serious conversation with him (Disraeli), as he is very vain and also enfeebled by age. It is true that illuminating and brilliant ideas are often produced, but the higher conception, the moral background, is lacking." These words were written to Bismarck in 1878, not by the arch-enemy Gladstone, but by the German Ambassador, who had every political reason to prefer Disraeli. Not only did the Queen's favourite intrigue behind the back of his Foreign Minister, not only did he, at times, choose to rely upon the disgruntled and discredited Beust, but into the bargain Professor Seton-Watson makes it irresistibly clear that "his negative and blocking policy was one of the main causes of the Russo-Turkish war," and thoroughly discredited England abroad. One has only to turn to any foreign comments upon our refusal of the Berlin Memorandum in May, 1876, to see this. The truth is that Disraeli had created a thoroughly deplorable situation, which was only saved by Salisbury and Shuvalov and the Secret Protocol of May 30th, 1878. The legend that the Treaty of Berlin was a triumph of Disraelian diplomacy has died as hard as other items of successful government propaganda. Professor Seton-Watson inclines rather to the view, which Gladstone expressed in the great speech at West Calder in November, 1879, that "everything that will make the Treaty of Berlin an epoch in the history of Europe, was due to the sword of Russia and to that sword alone." Salisbury, to whose dexterity perhaps some of the 1878 settlement may be attributed, "provides the synthesis between Disraeli and Gladstone." His private comments upon his chief are often illuminating; "the Jingoes," he wrote, "require to be calmed in their own language, and he is the only one among us who speaks it fluently." "But Lord Beaconsfield can't negotiate: he has never seen a map of Asia Minor," was however revenged, when Salisbury at the Congress pressed the cause of "a gallant Moslem nation," but having mislaid his notes was unable to remember that he meant the Lazes in Lazistan till Lord Odo Russell came to his rescue!

In tacit sympathy with Derby and Salisbury, Professor Seton-Watson raises a gentle protest against the exotic extravagances of both the Jew and the Scot, but there is little doubt that his story has a Slav for its unhappy hero, for Count Peter Shuvalov, not the old Jew, is really the man. It is indeed the new Russian material, to which Professor Seton-Watson has had access, which provides an altogether new interest, for Langer and other writers upon this period have been compelled to work without the correspondence between Shuvalov (Ambassador in London until 1879), Gorchakov and Alexander II. Shuvalov coined the phrase about Bismarck's nightmare of coalitions, and, according to his unpublished memoirs, "while Lord Salisbury was looking for names for these two Bulgarias, I proposed to him that one should be called 'Satisfied Bulgaria' and the other 'Discontented Bulgaria,'" a really magnificent thrust. But Shuvalov, like many other great Europeans, was thrown to the wolves of public opinion by a nervy Sovereign and his Chancellor, *ce vieillard pourri et méchant*, and came home to be unexpectedly disgraced. The Russian papers also reveal two extraordinary overtures made by Disraeli to Shuvalov in 1876 and 1877.

Professor Seton-Watson has written this book primarily from the point of view of English party politics, and he has known how to appreciate the rôle of the press, so curiously ignored by pre-war historians. The account of the National Convention at the St. James's Hall in December, 1876, at which Bryce, Freeman, George Trevelyan, William Morris, J. R. Green, Lecky, Ruskin and Burne-Jones met to protest against the atrocities in the Balkans, is somehow particularly interesting to-day. But the interplay of internal and international situations is admirably displayed; it is clear, for instance, that Shuvalov was more willing to make concessions to Salisbury in May, 1878, when he had been home to St. Petersburg only to feel that "the organs of government were no longer capable of maintaining order."

It is, indeed, as an international study that Professor Seton-Watson's book is most absorbing, and one can only wait impatiently for the publication of his *Britain in Europe*. He is accurately aware of every aspect, large and small, of international relations at this time, and as the Balkan question becomes increasingly dominant his special knowledge of that storm-shaken peninsula contributes to his mastery. In a way the Serbs and the Roumanians came off worst in 1878, for Bulgaria was more than half-way from a pre-natal state to the union of 1885, Russia constantly favoured the Montenegrins at the expense of the Serbs, while the Philhellene sympathies of England and France, combined with the English tradition of suspecting the Slav, brought the 1881 gains to Greece. The Roumanians, as Gladstone was quick to grasp, were the most shabbily treated, deserted as they were at a Balkan Villafranca and condemned to exchange Bessarabia for the Dobrogea.

Professor Seton-Watson is extremely fair, and he is careful to blame Disraeli politically, not personally. In so much justice one is surprised to discover a few minor injustices; he blames Disraeli, for instance, for the Austro-German alliance of 1879, which was surely in no way unwelcome to England at the time; it was Gladstone's accession to power in 1880 which helped Saburov to reconstruct the much more dangerous Three Emperors' League. There is an implication, too, that Disraeli did too much to encourage French colonial expansion, a development which Bismarck, single-handed, would certainly have induced. The whole story is a tragic one, for on the one hand one is faced with the betrayal of Shuvalov. On the other, one sees Gladstone returning to power, only to be presented with extra-European problems for which he had much less understanding than for those of the Balkans, where his name is still universally venerated.

ELIZABETH WISKEMANN

GUTS

A Garret in Chelsea. By PATRICK BRAND. *Bles.* 8s. 6d.

Mr. Shaw said that poverty is a crime. Most people are forced into that life of crime by their lack of more than average ability or self-confidence. Others are driven to it by ill-luck, such as sickness or honesty. There are a few who adopt it willingly because they are led astray by some form of idealism.

The author of this book is one of those wilful criminals. From his writing it is obvious that he is a man of more than average intelligence, quick to sum up a situation clearly and objectively, and detached and shrewd in his assessment of human character. With these gifts he should have been able to knock up a comfortable living, especially as he has not been afraid of hard work.

Instead of that, he has plunged into this wicked course of poverty, perjuring his health and self respect and his social integrity, and all the other eupeptic qualities which Mr. Shaw by inference would regard as the life of virtue.

This book is the story of Mr. Brand's downfall. It is an old-fashioned story, anachronistic in its latter-day bohemian setting. For who thinks of poets, novelists and artists now in terms of "Why are your hands so cold, Mimi"? B.B.C. jobs, Civil Service, banks, schoolmastering, advertising agencies, and other sedentary occupations congenial to an intellectual; all these absorb the ex-public school boy who has discovered a vocation for the arts. He has no need to starve in a garret; for his seven or eight hours a day as a servant of one of the vast modern big business or State corporations leave him sufficient leisure to follow his "fair light," even though only as an anaemic and "unhappy shadow." And if he is a young genius from the gutter, there is always the dole!

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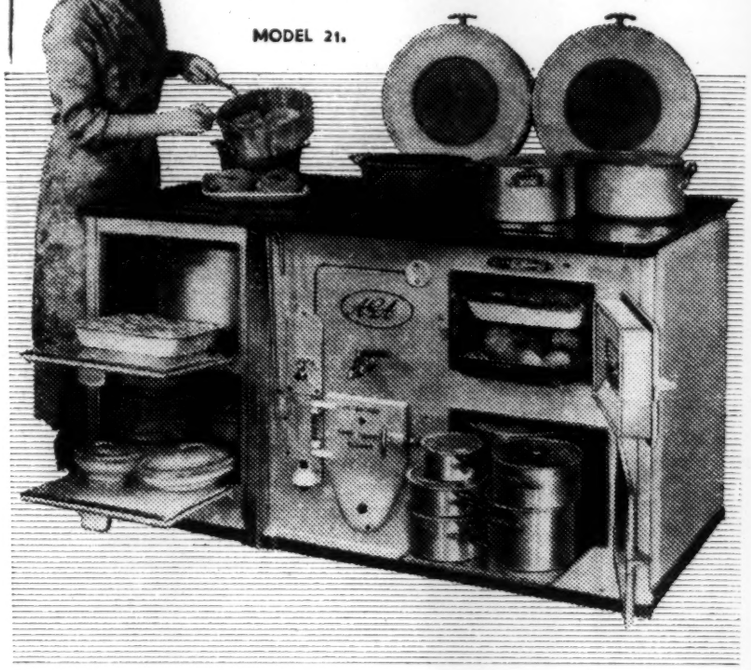

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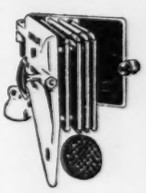

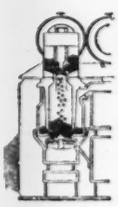

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Mr. Brand, however, has avoided these respectable modern dodges in his service of the Muse, and accordingly for some years he has led a life of precarious adventure that makes amusing reading.

His hardships have been worth while, for although as he says "at the time adventure seldom is pleasant," he has survived with his ideal attained. He has taught himself to write prose narrative. With this difficult technique mastered, he ought now to be able to go ahead and reap a few fruits. In this book alone he has stored enough material and characters to make three or four good novels. It is a pleasure to read his economical and simple prose (except when he occasionally uses an unnecessary adjective such as "veritable"). In the process of acquiring his technique as a short-story writer, he has worked as a docker in Boulogne, acted in travelling companies that were little more than barn-stormers, peddled advertisement space for dubious journals, lived on nothing at all except fag-ends and stew made from cat's-meat, slept on a wet stone floor in a shed (euphemistically termed "studio") in a Chelsea backyard, worn shoes soled with newspapers and roofing-felt. Indeed, if the reader wants to learn in detail how to exist for three months on a promise of five guineas at the end of that period, here is a very useful text-book.

While ascending these slummy steps to Parnassus, Mr. Brand has met every kind of bohemian, and his cruel portraits of the fakes and cranks, hangers-on and hang-overs, all trailing their feeble, affected, bone-lazy and superciliously sterile personalities in the wake of the genuine practitioners—well, these portraits suggest that Mr. Brand does not mean to be caught either by failure or by success and paralysed with the virus of futility.

Many of his stories are new and interesting: such as his account of a candle-auction in the shipping offices of Boulogne, or his picture of Crewe railway station on Sundays, as a sort of clearing-house for theatrical companies, the refreshment room a meeting-place of old stage-cronies who may not have met for fifteen years. And his description of his first attempt, as a virginal youth of twenty, to rehearse a passionate stage-kiss; that is really funny.

Indeed, the whole book is lightened with humour and genuine benevolence. That is why the poverty in it becomes not so much criminal as franciscan.

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A book by Professor Pigou is always an event in the economic world, and even so slight a volume as *Economics in Practice*, reproducing six recent lectures on current issues, is no exception. It is meant for the general reader; it contains little, if anything, that is new, it neither confirms nor attacks any of the higher flights of contemporary economic theory. But in its sanity and tolerance, its blend of conscientious accuracy and humane breadth, its practical realism and its modesty, it stands out among the welter of popular pronunciamentos and academic dissertations like an Adam house in a jerry-built street. Professor Pigou does not, perhaps, write as urbanely as the late Professor Cannan or as tellingly as Professor Robbins, but he has a permanent place among the small band who from time to time offer fresh proof that to be a fine economist one need not write jargon.

Professor Pigou confesses in his preface that he felt some hesitation in complying with the University of London's request that these lectures (delivered last year at the London School of Economics and supplemented by two more delivered at Cambridge) should be published. "The spoken word," he says, "even the word that is written to be read aloud, may well be too frail to face the austerities of print." *O si sic omnes!* But Professor Pigou has little to worry about. The disarming Apologia with which he opens is a model of what such things should be, and contains a welcome plea for better manners in economic controversy. "Economy and Waste," the second lecture, is a balanced and well-reasoned statement of the case for compensatory expenditure by public authorities during depression. "The Balance of Trade" admirably exemplifies what in the Apologia Professor Pigou has described as a major part of the economist's duty—the hammering into the public consciousness of a few elementary and universally neglected truths. "Inflation, Deflation, and Reflation" is perhaps open to a charge of superficiality and is the least good of the six lectures; but regarded merely as an essay in the definition of terms it has undoubted value. In "State Action and *Laissez-faire*" we find ourselves on ground which Professor Pigou has long made his own; the disputed territory between social and private advantage or marginal net product. He has many good things to say on this theme, though he never touches what to Socialists is the root of the matter, that is to say the distorting effect upon consumers' demand, considered as a guide to production, of gross inequalities of income. Finally, "The Economics of Planning," with its welcome absence of *a priori* condemnation, its discriminating common sense, sets out those essential points which should be—but alas! are not—firmly kept in mind by planners of all political complexions.

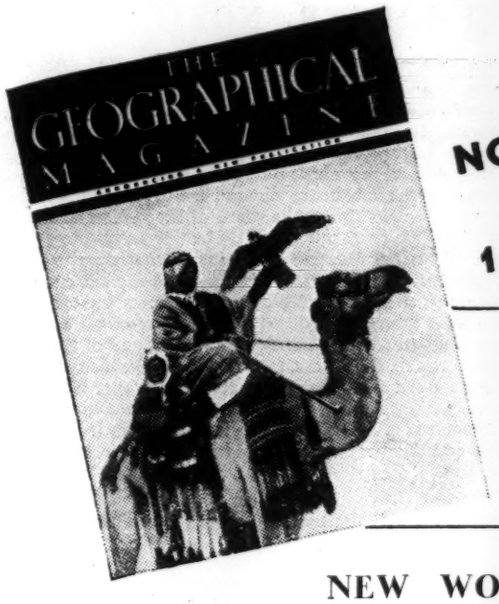
And it ends on a note which reinforces in the reader's mind the impression, left by the whole book, that Professor Pigou, although an economist, has not forgotten that he is a citizen.

H. M. C.

AN AMERICAN IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghan Journey. By BEN JAMES. *Cape.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The merit of the average American travel book lies in its appeal neither to the specialist nor to the hard-bitten globe trotter but to the ordinary reader with an appetite for travel and an inconsiderable knowledge of the countries concerned. Mr. James sets out knowing little of Afghanistan beyond a romantic sense of its bloody reputation and a superficial acquaintance with its recent history. His bias is neither scientific nor political. Certainly he is no aesthete, since the many fine examples of Moslem architecture on his route would appear to have escaped his notice altogether. In so far as he has a motive for his journey it is journalistic. He seeks a "story," finds it, and tells it without degenerating, like so many of his kind, into highly coloured sensationalism. What he sees has an impact upon him which is vivid and direct, unconnected with any previous experience (as when, in describing marriage customs typical of all Moslem countries, he seems to infer that they are peculiarly Afghan). The reactions of this class of American traveller approximate, in their spontaneity, to those of a highly observant child, save, in this case, for one deficiency: that the child would show a keener sense of visual beauty. Mr. James



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gives but the barest pictorial impression of the magnificent scenery through which he passed.

Within these limitations *Afghan Journey* is a readable book, laconic in style, agreeably astringent in its wit. Like too many travellers, Mr. James tends to dwell, albeit with spirit, upon the discomforts of his journey; but since he imprudently chose to travel in the blazing heat of a Persian July, it is pardonable that this element should have obtruded unduly on his impressions. From the Russian frontier he jolted across Persia by lorry to Meshed. Thence, unable to find transport to Herat, by the shortest and most interesting route into Afghanistan, he was forced to follow the long and dreary desert road to Dozdab, entering the country from the Baluchistan frontier. After a few days in Kandahar he proceeded to Kabul, where he remained for the rest of his visit.

As he travels Mr. James shows a pleasant eye for character, whether it be focused on the band of eccentric White Russians in the wilds of Khorassan, confident of making their fortunes by blowing gold out of the sand with an aeroplane propeller; the Baluchi chief, unimpressed by photographs of American sky-scrapers, who asked, "Why, if you have much land, do you live in such tall houses?"; the Indian who had once touched Gandhi's foot and declared that the contact produced an electric shock accompanied by sparks; the Afghan, discussing the punishment of adulterers, who boasted, "I am a progressive. I get a large rock. Then I drop it quickly on their heads. That is not so painful as dying by small stones." Equally laconic are Mr. James's further stories of atrocities in this country where "putting out an eye or cutting off a hand is common punishment for trivial offences."

The second half of the book is devoted to the story, half old-fashioned melodrama, half comic opera, of the mediaeval intrigues and treacheries and assassinations which make up the history of the Afghan Throne during the last fifteen years, culminating in King ("Mad Hatter") Amanullah's fantastic odyssey; the short-lived reign of the peasant bandit Bacha Saquo; the return to the Oriental norm under Nadir Khan and his own murder in turn. As Mr. James tells it, a trifle too picturesquely, it reads like the scenario of a film which cries out to be made.

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SHORTER NOTICES

The Memoirs of Count Apponyi. *Heinemann.* 16*s.*

Count Albert Apponyi was born on the eve of the Kossuth rebellion and for years afterwards he and his family lived out of Hungary. Of his childhood, education, and upbringing, he writes with enthusiasm for he was one of fortune's and heredity's favourites. Every page of the book, indeed, reflects the mind of a man of rank, a conservative with a benevolent twist to the left, hence when of age to enter the Hungarian Parliament it was to spend almost the whole of his parliamentary career in opposition. Of those years unfortunately he tells us nothing, yet, one imagines, so liberal-minded a man must during that time have learnt something of the hatred Hungary was inspiring in the subject-races of the Dual monarchy, a hatred reflected by the terms imposed by the Allies. The Count writes with dignity and feeling of his appearance with his fellow delegates before the Peace Council, and of the amazing discourtesy with which they were treated by the French authorities. But he says not a word that implies any recognition that Hungary was reaping what it had sown. On the lighter side the memoirs are full of charm, and musicians will find much to interest them in the Count's stories of Liszt and Wagner, whom he knew intimately; excellent, too, are his descriptions of Egypt, America, and the Italy of Mussolini.

Benes: Statesman of Central Europe. By PIERRE CRABITÉS. *Routledge.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

"I look upon him as being Central Europe's soundest statesman" and "I am obsessed by fear of another war." In these two sentences Judge Crabités gives the clue to this unusual biographical study. It is unusual because the author, who is known to English readers by his studies on the Sudan, claims no first-hand knowledge of his subject whatsoever. The first half of the book brings out the essential role of Benes, the tactician, by the side of Masaryk, the strategist, in the making of the Czechoslovak State. It shows him to be a dour determined person having the peasant wit to discern and profit by the weaknesses of the Allied panjandrums, and a rare political instinct. These qualities served him to stake out his claim for the best of the pickings of the old Austrian Empire; and he has certainly substantiated that claim since by an untiring devotion to *Realpolitik*. Starting with the 1920 treaty with Belgrade, Benes has steadily built up his sand-bag defences of the Treaties of St. Germain and Trianon, never averse from showing his power to coerce Hungary, and also taking a grim satisfaction in snapping the gossamer threads of Great-Power diplomacy. Whether he has also the wisdom to sponsor the adjustment of specific grievances at the appropriate moment remains to be seen.

The Theory of Money and Credit. By L. VON MISES. *Cape.* 18*s.*

Whoever was responsible for launching the Bedford Series of Economic Handbooks deserves the gratitude of all economists. These translations of works which have long been classics in their country of origin, should in the long run save an enormous amount of argument at cross purposes, duplication of research, and general waste of mental energy. Dr. Ludwig von Mises' *Theory of Money and Credit* has, from the point of view of the English reader, suffered somewhat from the long delay between its original publication and its translation by Mr. Batson. True, it bears no mark, in its purely theoretical portions, of having been written over twenty years ago; indeed, it is the measure of Dr. von Mises' analytical acumen and almost prophetic grasp of essentials that his book links up so aptly and smoothly with the controversies of the thirties. But it is a pity that he should lose in this country the credit to which he is entitled as an innovator. Within the compass of a short review it is not possible to do justice to this monumental work. It has all the qualities of classical economics at its best: the logical completeness, the single-minded concentration, the scrupulous accuracy of language. It has corresponding defects, such as extreme abstraction, an undeniably heavy style, and an intellectual arrogance sometimes amounting to sheer bad manners. The serious student is used to these things; but only the bravest of laymen or beginners are likely to tackle this book.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

WITH Europe in its present state one should not be surprised by the plethora of Cassandras that have arisen; yet that the Columbia company should be found among them *is* rather astonishing. No doubt the Handel centenary (still dragging out its weary length) is mainly responsible for our being reminded that "The Lord is a Man of War" (*Israel in Egypt*); but was it a mere coincidence that the same company has also given us a new recording of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*? For this work, written just over a hundred years ago under the influence of Alfred de Musset's extraordinary translation of De Quincey's "Opium-Eater," is in fact a perfect picture of the European scene to-day, down to the Hell's kitchen with which it ends—shrieks of the Sabbath and heavy undertone of the *Dies Irae* menacing us with an untimely end.

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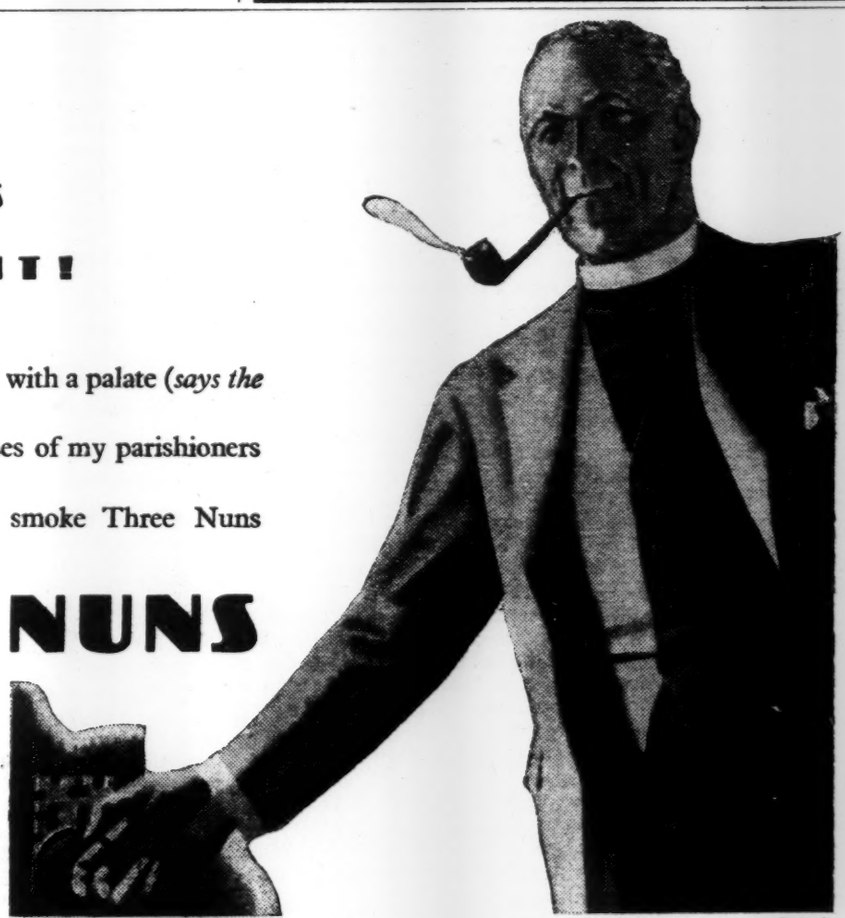
Even if I were not blessed with a palate (*says the Vicar*), the appreciative noses of my parishioners would still impel me to smoke Three Nuns



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The Handel records (there are two of them—" But as for His people " and " Moses and the Children of Irsael " on Col. LX378, and the above-mentioned chorus on Col. L.R.20) have the inestimable advantages of the Leeds Choir, the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Sir Thomas Beecham, and I suppose the result is as good as it could be made. But the truth appears to be that choirs, however superb, cannot record really well: like bells, a multitude of human voices has too many overtones, and the result—on the gramophone—is unavoidably fuzzy, monotonous and dull. This music, too, seems to me very uninteresting, in an eighteenth-century way; but that is probably mere prejudice on my part.

Cassandra's other utterance—the *Symphonie Fantastique*—is, I am sorry to have to state, a very bad business. It is delivered by the Orchestre Symphonique of Paris, under Selmar Meyrowitz (Col. LX372–7), and it exhibits all the faults of French recording (why is this always so bad?). The string tone is thin and shrill, the balance is poor, the drums and bass generally (especially in the first movement) are far too faint, the climaxes substitute blatancy for brilliance, the conducting is pedestrian, and the whole recording lacks *bite* in an altogether inadmissible degree. Against these strictures I am glad to put the fact that the recording improves towards the end; the brass in the March movement has the slick neatness of French playing, and the last movement, apart from as villainous a set of bells as I have ever heard, is fairly good.

It is a pleasure to turn from this failure to the Overture to *Béatrice and Benedict*, also by Berlioz, rendered by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Hamilton Harty (Col. LX371). This work has all its composer's best qualities—scintillating vitality in the fast passages, mysterious originality in the slow; and the playing and recording are every bit as good as those of the *Corsair* overture we were given two months ago. Can I say more?

I seem to have taken a long time to come to the " record of the month "; but here it is at last—Schubert's *Seventh Symphony in C*, rendered by Adrian Boult and the B.B.C. Orchestra (H.M.V. D.B.2415–20). Can there be anyone who does not love this famous work? I hardly think so. It must be nearly as popular as Beethoven's Fifth, than which it is still considerably less hackneyed. The present version is a worthy successor to that of the *Eroica* which I had the pleasure of reviewing last month; it has the same admirable qualities. The definition is superb: I have never heard the wind triplets in the first movement more clearly delivered. Perhaps it was a pity to have damped down the *fortissimi* quite so much, but at least the effect is far more pleasing than the blatancy displayed in the Berlioz symphony. Particularly beautiful is the playing of the transition back to the first theme in the *Andante*. Everyone must buy these records. And while I am on the subject of Schubert, let me entreat the H.M.V. company to give us a recording of the " new " *E major Symphony*, in the excellent version which Weingartner conducted at the last B.B.C. concert. This is a delightful work, highly characteristic of the composer at his maturity; a recording would help to give it the popularity it deserves.

The only other orchestral records I have to mention this month are those of Mozart's *G minor Symphony*, played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Koussevitzky (H.M.V. D.B.2343–5.) The recording is well up to standard; but the work is one of the most brittle in existence, and I do not find Koussevitzky's performance of it either delicate or supple enough. There is an unfortunate speeding up just after the statement of the first theme, and I feel that the Trio of the Minuet is taken too fast. But the rendering has at least the virtues of firmness and high definition.

Chamber Music is rather thinly represented this month; but, since so few people care for it in any case, one must be thankful for what one gets. It is, however, impossible to feel grateful for the Quartetto di Roma's recording of Verdi's *String Quartet* (H.M.V. D.B.4427–9). Their tone is tenuous and uncertain, and the whole performance singularly flat. In any case, I cannot feel much enthusiasm for this work: Verdi's genius was as unsuited as possible to the genre, and his single attempt at it is most insipid. On the other hand, the Galimir Quartet play most beautifully in Ravel's well-known *Quartet in F* (Decca, LY6105–7). This is a very good record indeed; the tone is particularly sweet and the balance excellent. There must be many people who have long desired a new recording of this lovely work: I have no hesitation in recommending them this one.

Finally a vocal record—one of the best I have ever heard. This consists of two Mozart songs—" How long in Torment Singing " from *Figaro*, and " Such charming Melodies " from *The Magic Flute*—sung by Willi Domgraf-Fassbaender and Felicie Hüni-Mihacsek, supported by Gerhard Witting in the second excerpt, and with orchestral accompaniment under Julius Prüwer (Decca, CA8198). This is the second record of Mozart operatic excerpts which Decca have given us lately, and I hope they will continue in the same for some time. The music of these two songs is exquisite and the rendering as nearly perfect as may be. The tone of the voices is extraordinarily bland, nor do they ever drown the accompaniment—a frequent fault in vocal records.

Now for the dance records. Undoubtedly the best tunes of the month are " Au Revoir " and " I was Lucky," from the new Chevalier film. They are recorded on Decca, F5466 and F5455. I thoroughly recommend them. Bing Crosby fans will like " It's easy to remember," a pretty tune, with " Swanee River " on the obverse (Brunswick 01993). Two vocal numbers, " Malola " and " Home Again," are pleasant, in the " sleepy " genre; but Mr. Collie Knox, who sings them, has far too gentlemanly an accent for this kind of thing. I thought " Ein bisschen Leichtsinn kann nicht schaden," sung by the Comedy Harmonists, pretty and out of the common; German jazz is not everybody's cup of tea, but some might find this worth trying (H.M.V. B8296). Finally, for those who were débutantes in 1914 and wish to revive tender memories of waltzing on the eve of the war, there are those old favourites, " Nights of Gladness " and " Destiny," played with much verve by Alfredo Campoli and his orchestra (Decca, F5434).

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2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 264

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Report of Ivor Brown

The Elizabethan genius for spinning poetry out of legal terminology has naturally attracted many imitators, and there was much skill shown in a large entry. Some were prepared to let poetry slip provided that they could play with the jargon. In this style Advena ended neatly:

> Hence I propose in fine that we enact
> A league bilateral and/or a pact
> Of mutual esteem, (A) based upon
> Religious Sanctions and (B) guaranteed
> By Economic Safeguards: these indeed
> May be negotiated later on.

At the other extreme was " H. C. M.," who wrote a charming sonnet, but avoided the lingo of diplomacy. Gerald Summers finished a good sonnet even better with:

> If these delights shall help me pass my bill
> Come live with me and be—my what you will.

In his other entry he offered what I take to be the most teasing pair of lines ever offered to verse-speakers.

> Pray bid me not qualitatively speak
> Nor my large love quantitatively limit.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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SUISSE. Hotel Carron, Fionnay; altitude 4,900, village pittoresque, vallée renommée de sa flore; cinq cabanes accessibles. Pension 7 francs. Auto de Sembrancher.

MISCELLANEOUS—continued

FACTORY GIRLS' COUNTRY HOLIDAY FUND. Chairman, Lady Loch. FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED. Hundreds of the poorest working girls hoping for a week or more at the sea during the next few months.—Gifts thankfully acknowledged by the HON. TREASURER, or MISS CANNEY, 75 Lamb's Conduit Street, London, W.C.1.

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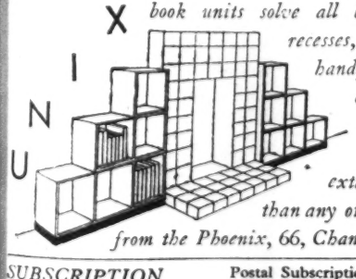
UNITARIAN Publications Free.—"A Common-sense view of the Bible." MISS BARMBY, Mount Pleasant, Sidmouth.



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BOOKS

The subject offered ample opportunity for play on words; arms and encirclement, parity and reciprocity, were in frequent use, and the voice that breathed o'er Eden percolated into several sonnets. My first selection is E. W. Fordham's contribution, which seems best to combine the language of the statesman with the rhythm and feeling of the true sonneteer. For second prize I have chosen J. M. D. Pringle, though I feel that a poet with a Scottish name might hesitate to rhyme "law" with "door." Commendation to H. C. Riddell, Medway, Pibroch, Alice Herbert, P. R. Laird, and Peter Hedley. Leslie Ralph began with customary wit, but his close was rather off the rails.

FIRST PRIZE

That type of mind thou may'st in me behold,
Sweet maid, that cannot be content to rest
On faith alone that love may not grow cold.
Security, dear heart, must be our quest.
If, when life's noon-day into twilight sinks,
My strength decaying, and thy beauty passed,
An ancient plighted troth is all that links
Each to the other, will the chain hold fast?
Who knows? Come, let us sign and seal a pact,
Bilateral in sanctions and design.
Thus stern reality and frigid fact
Shall meet romance upon the dotted line.
Let fools in splendid isolation dwell:
For us there shall be no division bell.

E. W. FORDHAM

SECOND PRIZE

Soft April breathes, Dear Heart, and once again
Love's Chancelleries are stirring; now once more
Pacts, Treaties, and Agreements by the score
Are signed with kisses down each Lover's Lane:
When Spring is *rapporteur* can we remain
Unreconciled? Can'st thou neglect the law
And coldly slam the unrepentant door,
Risking encirclement on love's terrain?
I do not ask for much: a Two-Power Pact,
Bi-lateral ('tis drafted and outlined),
And secret even, should'st thou feel alarmed,
For Times may wait when Time itself is tact;
Only scorn not this Note, but bear in mind
That though disarming thou art not disarmed.

J. M. D. PRINGLE

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 121.—ODDS DOGS

"It's useless your playing poker," said Groucher to Macfoozle. "You don't understand the laws of chance."

"But I do understand them," said Macfoozle.

"You do?"

"Of course I do."

Groucher looked sceptical. "See here," said Macfoozle, exasperated. "I'll give you an example. Take a look out of the window, and tell me—without reference to breed—how many of my dogs are visible in the garden."

Groucher told him.

"Right," said Macfoozle. He took the back of an envelope and made some calculations. "The chances that all of those dogs are terriers is thirty-five times as great as the chance that they are all cocker spaniels."

Is it possible to state how many of Macfoozle's dogs are (a) *terriers,* (b) *cocker spaniels?*

PROBLEM 119.—EIGHT CUBES

This problem, as one or two solvers have recognised, is a variant of one that I published some years ago. The solution turns on an analysis of the 15 ways in which the faces of a cube can be numbered. Only two of these yield eight different "sums" which do not include a seven; one of these must have been Sonia's. Her "sums" are: 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15.

PROBLEM 118.—BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM

A set of Low's cartoons goes to: A. Davison, 27 Burdenshott Avenue, Richmond, Surrey.

There were 157 solutions. *Five* points are awarded.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

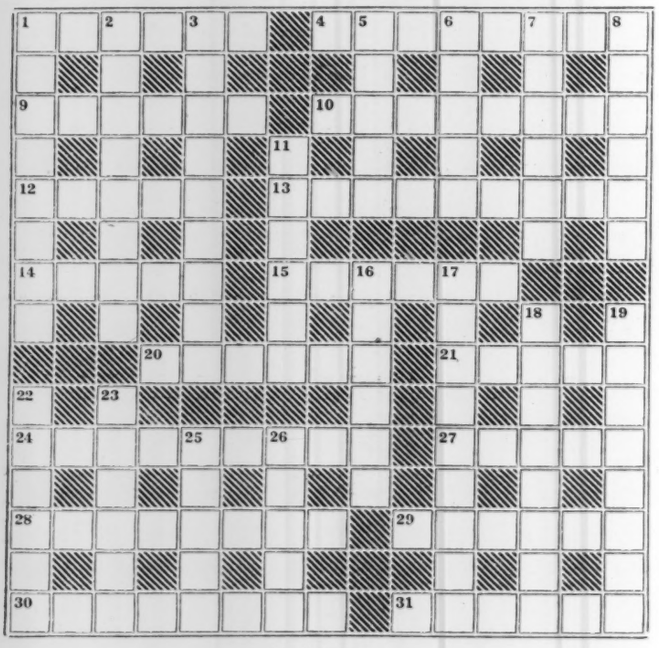
A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10*s*. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution. CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 267

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
A. McDonald Gordon, 5 Essex Court, Temple, E.C.

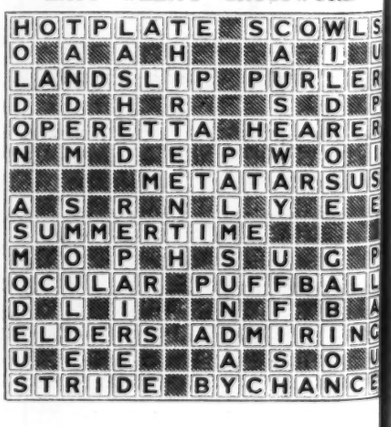
ACROSS.

1. Its runners have no legs.
4. Do they shoot rapids?
9. An engagement for 4.
10. Sounds like a grinding competition.
12. Describes culinary efficiency and beautiful deficiency.
13. Turner to be given away.
14. Motorists do not do this when they want to play the game.
15. Beacon for writers.
20. When everything comes to an end.
21. Chinese emblem in the heavens.
24. Such a downpour is often a sight to see.
27. Lightened as it were by the sun.
28. Mr. Eden may have met them but has not yet got them to meet.
29. You step on it outside the West Door of St. Paul's.
30. Walk with a swagger to get round something.
31. Meditates on the first letter.

DOWN.

1. Putting one's foot down on the Statute Book.
2. Comes playfully between the curtains.
3. Monkey flour perhaps.
5. It's a joiner's job to do this.
6. Stormy place for landlubbers.
7. Deducted from bad tea.
8. Swift young lady.
11. If a car can be returned from the Continent.
16. Its singing is hot music.
17. Not the time for breaking up the home but quite the reverse.
18. Weapons for the C.I.D.?
19. Sweetly affectionate insects.
22. 19 are.
23. An afternoon meal disturbed by *delirium tremens*.
25. Free rides if the fire goes out.
26. A tree on a mountain.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



London Amusements

MATINEES

All at 2.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

ALDWYCH. The Dominant Sex. M., W., S.
APOLLO. Hyde Park Corner. Wed. & Sat.
COMEDY. The Beggar's Opera. Tues. & Sat.
DUCHESS. Cornelius. Wed., Sat. & Estr. Mon.
HIPPODROME. Yes, Madam? M., Th., Sat.
PHOENIX. "Family Affairs." Thurs., Sat.
QUEEN'S. Wind & the Rain. Wed. & Sat.
ROYALTY. "Frolic Wind." Thurs., Sat.
ST. MARTIN'S. Man of Yesterday. Tu., Fri
SAVOY. The Aunt of England. M., Th., Sat.
STRAND. 1066 and All That. April 27.
WESTMINSTER. "Valkyrie." Wed. & Sat.
WHITEHALL. Viceroy Sarah. Tues. & Sat.

THEATRES

ALDWYCH. Tem. 6404.
8.30. Mats., Wed., Sat., & Easter Mon., 2.30.
THE DOMINANT SEX.
By Michael Egan.

APOLLO. (Ger. 2663). Reopens Sat., 2.30. 8.30.
HYDE PARK CORNER, by Walter Hackett.
MARION LORNE, GODFREY TEARLE,
GORDON HARKER, J. H. ROBERTS.

COLISEUM, Charing Cross. Temple Bar 3161.
IN REHEARSAL, ANDRE CHARLOT'S
"DANCING CITY."
A MUSICAL PLAY.

COMEDY. 8.30. TUES., SAT., 2.30. Whi. 2578.
THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.
"A Lovely Show."—*Daily Sketch.*

DUCHESS. Catherine St., W.C.2. Tem. 8243.
Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Wed., Sat., & Easter Mon., 2.30.
RALPH RICHARDSON in
CORNELIUS, by J. B. PRIESTLEY.

GLOBE. Ger. 1592. Evenings. 8.30.
No Perfs. 18th & 19th. Easter Mon. & April 25th, 2.30.
OWEN NARES,
ADELE DIXON, KAY HAMMOND in
YOUTH AT THE HELM.

HIPPODROME. 8.15. Easter Mon., Thurs., Sat.
BOBBY HOWES & BINNIE HALE in
"YES, MADAM?"
Closed Holy Week. Reopens April 20 at 8.15.

PHOENIX. 8.30. Thurs., Sat., 2.30. Tem. 8611.
LILIAN BRAITHWAITE in
"FAMILY AFFAIRS."

QUEEN'S THEATRE. (Ger. 4517).
Evgs., 8.30. Wed., Sat. & Easter Mon., 2.30.
THE WIND AND THE RAIN.
London's Longest Run. Now in its 2nd Year.

ROYALTY. (Gerrard 7331).
Evenings 8.30. Matinees, Thurs. & Sats., 2.30.
"FROLIC WIND," by RICHARD PRYCE.
Based on Novel by Richard Oke.

ST. JAMES'. Whi. 3903. 8.30. Wed., Thurs., 2.30.
GLADYS COOPER & RAYMOND MASSEY present
WORSE THINGS HAPPEN AT SEA,
a Farcical Comedy by KEITH WINTER.
YVONNE ARNAUD with FRANK LAWTON.

ST. MARTIN'S THEATRE. (Tem. 1443).
Evenings, 8.30. Matinees, Tues. & Fri., 2.30.
LESLIE BANKS in
MAN OF YESTERDAY.

SAVOY. 8.30. Easter Mon., Th., Sat., 2.30.
HAIDÉE WRIGHT in
"The AUNT OF ENGLAND."

STRAND. (Tem. 2660). Thurs., April 25, at 8.
(Subs. 8.30). First Mat., April 27 at 2.30.
1066 AND ALL THAT.
A Comic History with Music.

WESTMINSTER, Palace St., S.W.1. (Vic. 0283).
Tuesday next, April 23, at 8.15. Subs. 8.30.
Matinees, Weds. and Sats., 2.30. FOR TWO WEEKS,
"VALKYRIE."
A new Play by Christen Jul.
JOYCE BLAND, TORIN THATCHER, FRANCES CLARE.
7s. to 1s. 6d. incl., all bookable.

WHITEHALL. (Whi. 6692).
Evenings, 8.30. Matinees, Tues. and Sat. at 2.30.
IRENE VANBRUGH in
VICEROY SARAH.

WYNDHAM'S. Temple Bar 3028.
Box Office Open.
DIANA WYNYARD in
SWEET ALOES, by Jay Mallory.
Run suspended until Mon., April 29.

PICTURE THEATRES

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"LAC AUX DAMES" (A)
(Martin's Summer) with Simone Simon.
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Monday, April 22nd, **JACK AHOY.**
Thursday, April 25th,
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REPERTORY THEATRES

BIRMINGHAM **Repertory.**
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Pigs. By Anne Morrison & Paterson McNutt.

CROYDON **Repertory.**
Evenings 8. Mon. & Sat., 5 & 8.15.
Murder on the Second Floor.
By Frank Vosper.

HARROGATE **White Rose Players.**
Evenings 8.15. Sat., 6.35 & 9.
Queer Cargo. By Noel Langley.

LIVERPOOL **Repertory.**
Evenings 7.45. Mat., Sat., 2.30.
Hamlet. By Shakespeare.

MANCHESTER **Repertory.**
Evenings 7.30.
The Improper Duchess. By J. B. Fagan.

NORTHAMPTON **Repertory.**
Evenings 6.30 & 8.50.
The Private Secretary. By Charles Hawtrey.

The Repertory Theatres whose announcements appear above are members of the Association of Repertory Theatres. *For information concerning Theatres belonging to this Association, or qualified to belong to it, apply to the Honorary Secretary, Bache Matthews, 7 Tavistock Place, London, W.C.1.*

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LECTURES AND MEETINGS

THE ETHICAL CHURCH, Queen's Road, Bayswater, Sunday, April 21, at 11. MR. H. J. BLACKHAM: THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS. 7, MR. H. J. BLACKHAM: TASKS OF OUR TIME.

Smalls

Our classified advertisements (in newspaper language "Smalls") are growing and for a very good reason. It is estimated that *each issue* of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION has not far short of a hundred thousand readers.

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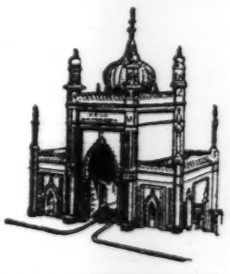

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

THE BUDGET'S RECEPTION—LOCAL LOANS CONVERSION CHANCES—COST OF NATIONAL DEBT AND FUTURE SAVINGS—DIESEL OIL TAX

THE attitude of the City barons to Mr. Chamberlain's fourth Budget was one of benign neutrality. The small man was entitled to his day, they agreed, but they are confident that next year it will be the turn of the large income and surtax payer. Did not Mr. Chamberlain apologise for his failure to remove this year the extra 10 per cent. which had been imposed on the surtax payers? By next April, no doubt, this will be counted as a promise to do something, and as the yield from direct taxation is again being estimated on the low side it should be possible to take that 6*d.* off the income tax. Mr. Keynes will be glad to see that Mr. Chamberlain reads his speeches at the annual meeting of the National Mutual Life Assurance Society. Referring to the fall in the long-term rate of interest, Mr. Keynes in February urged that the authorities should consolidate the position which they had won rather than aim at an immediate further advance, and that they should let everyone know that they had confidence in the continuance of a low rate of interest. Mr. Chamberlain expressed this confidence by retaining the fixed debt charge at £224 millions, which he thought should leave something available for debt redemption out of revenue, and by taking powers to effect a conversion of 3 per cent. Local Loans as and when it becomes practicable. But he was careful not to leave the impression that he would manipulate the gilt-edged market or force upon investors another conversion loan at a lower rate of interest before they were ready to accept it. The gilt-edged market showed its appreciation of Mr. Chamberlain's gentlemanly behaviour by putting 3 per cent. Local Loans up to 96⅛ on Wednesday.

* * *

How far will the gilt-edged market have to rise before 3 per cent. Local Loans can be converted? The popular answer is—When 2½ per cent. Consols have risen to par (i.e., by 12 points). But this is a misleading exaggeration. As I explain in a subsequent paragraph, the Local Loans Fund is to be reorganised and the new stock to be issued need not necessarily be equivalent to 2½ per cent. at par. The only hint which Mr. Chamberlain has given to the gilt-edged market is that 3 per cent. Local Loans stock will in future be supported by the Government broker and that sooner or later it will rise to par, assuming the continuance of cheap money, after which a reorganisation of the Fund will be taken in hand. The prevailing yields offered in the gilt-edged market are given in the following table :—

	Highest Price, 1935.	Price	Yield %. Flat Gross.	Gross.	Redemption Net.
			£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
War Loan, 3½% (1952 or after)	110⅛	107⅜	3 5 6	3 0 0	2 5 0
Conversion, 3½% (1961 or after)	112¾	107¾	3 5 0	3 1 3	2 6 3
Locals, 3%	98¼	96⅛	3 2 6	—	—
Consolidated, 2½% ...	94⅝	88⅛	2 16 9	—	—
Funding, 4% (1960–90) ...	121¾	118⅛x.d.	3 7 6	2 19 0	2 2 9
Consolidated, 4% (1957 or after)	118½	116½	3 9 0	3 0 0	2 3 9
Victory, 4% (drawings) ...	119⅛	116¼	3 9 0	3 0 9	2 4 9
Conversion, 5% (1944–64)	124⅛	121 x.d.	4 2 6	2 7 0	1 7 3
Conversion, 4½% (1940–44)	113⅝	113⅜	4 0 0	1 19 9	1 1 0
Funding, 3% (1959–69) ...	106	104⅛	2 17 6	2 15 3	2 2 0
Conversion, 3% (1948–53)	107⅜	106	2 16 9	2 9 6	1 16 6
Conversion, 2½% (1944–49)	103⅛	103	2 8 6	2 3 0	1 12 0

Gross equivalent of net redemption yield with tax at 4s. 6d.

* * *

Last year the fixed debt charge of £224 millions enabled approximately £20 millions of debt to be redeemed. How was this done? The sinking fund arrangements are unnecessarily complicated. Briefly, any difference between the interest plus management cost of the debt and the fixed Budget charge of £224 millions is applied to the new sinking fund. Last year £12.3 millions were so allocated. But any surplus of revenue over expenditure, including the new sinking fund (last year £7.5 millions), is called the old sinking fund and is issued to the National Debt Commissioners in the next financial year. The interest and management of the National Debt last year actually cost only £211.7 millions, thanks to the low average rate of 12*s.* 6*d.* per cent. on Treasury bills. £211.7 millions represented 2.71 per cent. on the National Debt as compared with 3.96 per cent. in 1930/31. This may seem extraordinary cheap, but in relation to the budget and the national income the debt charge is still high. The cost of the National debt in 1933/4 represented 32.3 per cent. of the Budget total and 6.11 per cent. of the national income. The comparative figures for 1913/14 and 1924/25 are as follows :—

FIGURES OF THE *Economist*

	National Income (In Millions.)	Cost of National Debt. Per cent. of National Income.	Per cent. of Total Budget.
1913/14	£2,300	1.07%	14.2%
1924/25	£3,800	9.40%	48.6%
1933/34	£3,600	6.11%	32.3%

According to the *Economist*, nearly one-fifth of the total national income now passes through the Exchequer every year—a proportion two and a half times as large as before the war.

* * *

The opportunities for effecting further savings in the cost of the National debt are for a time very limited. The Chancellor can probably make a small saving by converting £150 millions of Treasury 2 per cent. Bonds, 1935/38, and by calling the remaining £44 millions of Treasury 3 per cent. Bonds. The conversion of £430 3 per cent. Local Loans does not benefit the Exchequer directly as the interest is not a charge on the Exchequer, but on the Local Loans Fund which is in receipt of interest from the borrowing local authorities. No big saving can be effected until 1940 when £375½ millions of 4½ per cent. Conversion Loan can be called. Conversions apart, I am glad that Mr. Chamberlain has listened to the arguments which have been put forward in these columns and elsewhere for a reorganisation of Local Loans Fund. The Local Loans Fund is financed by the issue of 3 per cent. stock which is in the form of a perpetual annuity, Parliament reserving the right to order redemption at par by giving one month's notice. 3 per cent. Local Loans stock has been issued in the past at a considerable discount, and in making loans to the local authorities no charge is made for amortisation of discount. On a strict accounting basis the Local Loans Fund must be insolvent. Indeed, the uncovered discount totals £123 millions. If future repayments far exceeded new loans and the surplus cash could not be invested to yield 3 per cent. the Fund would not even be able currently to pay its way. I hope that the Treasury will bear in mind Mr. Keynes' suggestion that the new stock should have a series of redemption dates spread over a period from five to twenty-five years hence. It is a serious technical defect of the gilt-edged market that the greater part of the available supply of Government securities should be in the form of either three-month Treasury bills or of securities having no fixed date of redemption within the next fifty years.

* * *

The worst feature of the Budget is the tax of 8*d.* per gallon on diesel oil. Whenever there is a technical development designed to cheapen the cost of transport, the Treasury takes a special delight in penalising it. Mr. Chamberlain stated that there were now 7,000 diesel-engined motor vehicles on the roads and that they were increasing daily. The diesel engine with one gallon of fuel will do as much work as a petrol engine will do with 1¾ gallons of petrol. The old duty on diesel oil was only 1*d.* per gallon whereas the duty on petrol is 8*d.* per gallon. Obviously the Treasury had a case for increasing the duty on diesel oil, but to increase it from 1*d.* to 8*d.* is preposterous. It may be that diesel oil can be imported into this country to-day at about 2½*d.* per gallon and petrol at about 3½*d.* per gallon, but this is the result of over-production and price cutting in the American oil industry. Normally, petrol would cost double the price of diesel oil, so that the latter cannot stand as high a tax as petrol. This outrageous tax of 8*d.* on diesel oil will not only upset the plans of the more efficient traders distributing goods by road, it will probably lead to price-cutting and losses in the motor vehicle manufacturing industry. Meanwhile, the diesel engine industry abroad will make further headway while the British industry is being handicapped by manufacturing losses. Under any rational system of Government the Treasury would not be allowed to impede economic development for a paltry £1,200,000 a year. No doubt, the railway companies are delighted for the diesel road vehicle is a serious competitor.

HOLIDAYS

Subscribers about to go on holiday are reminded that the Publisher must receive Change of Address instructions by first post Wednesday morning to be effective.

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